Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXII, Issue No. 6 | **MONDAY** JANUARY 9, 2012 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

POLL RESULTS

Should non-NMI descent U.S. citizens be allowed to vote on issues relating to Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution?

Yes	109
No	81
Undecided	1
No opinion	2

Sunday, January 8, 2012

INSIDE

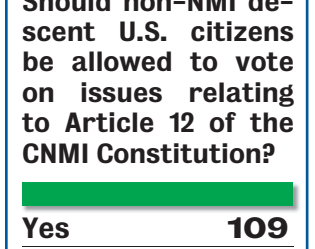
NATION

Capitol Comeback

The signals are strong. One year after being shot in the head, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is on a mission to return to the job she so clearly loved.

➤ PAGE 14

FOCUS



Peas in Pod

The resemblance is striking: the full cheeks and quick smile, the confident gait, the habit of gesturing with both hands when he speaks.

➤ PAGE 17

LIFE & STYLE

Ever After

Drew Barrymore is engaged to art consultant Will Kopelman.

➤ PAGE 21

Kilili survives Day 1 of 5-day food stamp challenge. PAGE 2

Fund to sell member home loan program. PAGE 3

NMI to sue DHS over parole for jobless aliens

» Worker groups say lawsuit unnecessary

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Buckingham

Attorney general Edward Buckingham recommended to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial the filing of a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security over the federal agency's decision to "allow thousands of unemployed aliens to remain in the Commonwealth under a claim of parole power," but the United Workers Movement-NMI and Dekada Movement said yesterday this lawsuit is "unnecessary."

See NMI on Page 4

$9.7M in tax rebate/refund checks yet to be released

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Amid revenue shortfall and overall budget deficit, the government has yet to release $9.7 million or 40 percent in 2010 tax rebate/refund checks to thousands of taxpayers in the CNMI. This, as filing for 2011 income tax returns draws near.

Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson said during the weekend that the government has already paid "approximately $13.7 million," and this was since mid-October when the Fitial administration started mailing out checks.

The $13.7 million represents 60 percent of the total claims, and the government continues to release checks as funds become available.

This means for tax year 2010, the total tax refunds and rebates is $23.4 million.

"We release checks in batches on a

See TAX on Page 4

John Manglona is acting chief justice as Castro on sick leave

» Sources: Associate Justice Alexandro Castro suffers mild stroke

Manglona

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Associate justice John A. Manglona has been serving as acting chief justice in the CNMI Supreme Court since last Monday after associate justice Alexandro C. Castro took a sick leave.

Saipan Tribune sources disclosed that Castro suffered a mild stroke and has been recuperating at his house.

CNMI Supreme Court public information officer Jim Stowell on Friday said the minor stroke is something that he can't confirm whether it is true or false.

Stowell said he also has no information about the status of Castro's health.

"What I can only tell you is that he's (Castro) on sick leave

See JUSTICE on Page 4

NEW LOOK HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

House of Representatives sergeant-at-arms Peter Towai places the individual photo frames of the members of the 17th House on a new wooden board enclosed in glass in the lobby of the legislative building on Capital Hill. A joint House and Senate leadership meeting is set for Jan. 12 to map out the Legislature's priorities this year, which is a midterm election year.

Local

Kilili survives Day 1 of 5-day food stamp challenge

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said it is "tough" to live on $4.87 a day as he survived the first of a five-day food stamp challenge yesterday.

Sablan's challenge to live on $4.87 a day seeks to convince the CNMI government to work with him to get the U.S. Department of Agriculture to include the CNMI in the national food stamp program which would bring $12 million to $24 million in additional money to the local economy.

On his first day on the challenge, Sablan's breakfast consisted of apple cinnamon oatmeal for 89 cents, while lunch was Spam and cabbage with rice for $1.14

Dinner was Japanese Yakisoba with cucumber and tomato salad for $1.93. Another 50 cents was for drinking water, and 45 cents for three cups of coffee.

Sablan

While the total spent on the first day was $4.91, or a few cents over the budgeted $4.87, Sablan said the $4.87 average will be spread over five days so some days could see higher or lower than that amount.

$4.87 is the maximum food stamp benefit for an individual in the CNMI.

"It's tough to live on an average of $4.87 a day. While government officials would say they know how hard it is, they wouldn't really know until they try it. They need to feel how people feel," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Sablan has long been asking the Fitial administration to support his proposal to have the CNMI included in the national Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, but to no avail.

The Fitial administration remains opposed to the idea, saying the administrative costs are high.

Sablan raised the question why the Fitial administration could not find $37, for example, for the annual administrative cost of each food stamp recipient in the CNMI should it choose to become part of SNAP, which will bring in at least $12 million in additional money to the CNMI.

He said the $37 is the administrative cost spent in Guam, where food stamp benefit is more than double than in the CNMI.

Sablan said right now the food stamp program costs about $1.2 million to administer. Under the national program, the CNMI would have to cover half or some $600,000 the administrative costs, which Sablan said the new tax revenues would more than take care of.

FOR FIRST QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 2012

Senate panel asks Finance for itemized allotment, spending of all agencies

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) gave the Department of Finance up to Jan. 16 to provide itemized allotment and expenditures for personnel and operations of all government departments and agencies on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota for the first quarter of fiscal year 2012 or from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2011.

Taimanao's committee is planning an oversight hearing on the first quarter FY 2012 finances, hoping that agencies would be able to stay within their budget and not add to the $25.8 million budget deficit for FY 2011 alone and the cumulative deficit of some $370 million.

Taimanao

The government's FY 2012 budget is only $102 million, back from the level of over 20 years ago.

The Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee also plans to visit the departments and agencies on the three islands to "discuss, review, and validate" each agency or department's first quarter allotment and spending.

Taimanao also requested Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson to be at the first quarter budget review meetings from Jan. 26 to Feb. 3 on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

"It is important for the government offices and agencies to let the Secretary of Finance know firsthand what is going on with each respective office's first quarter allotment and expenditures," Taimanao said in a letter to Larson.

Section 401(e) of Public Law 1-55 requires the Finance secretary to submit at the end of each quarter an itemized report on the allotments and expenditures for personnel and operations of each business unit.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, in a separate interview, said with only a few days since the end of the first quarter of FY 2011, they have yet to come up with a report on the actual collection and spending for the quarter.

He said the administration has not reached the point wherein they would reduce the quarterly allotment among government agencies and departments.

House Ways and Means Committee chair Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) earlier said that the government's $25.8 million budget deficit in FY 2011 when the budget was only $122 million and the cumulative deficit of $370 million are "alarming."

He said the government needs to really start living within its means and be more aggressive in generating additional revenues.

Budget deficit is a combination of overspending and revenue shortfall.

District Court dismisses ex-Palms Resort employee's discrimination lawsuit

The federal court has dismissed the discrimination lawsuit filed by a former employee of the Palms Resort Saipan against the hotel's owner.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge J. Michael Seabright dismissed with prejudice Jane Quitugua's lawsuit based upon the parties' agreement.

Attorney Michael W. Dotts, counsel for Palms Resort Saipan owner Micronesian Resort Inc., and attorney Stephen Woodruff, counsel for plaintiff Jane Quitugua, recently informed the district court about their full settlement.

The parties asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit, saying their settlement does not require the court's continued jurisdiction.

Dotts and Woodruff requested that once a new judge is designated to preside over this case that the new judge immediately enter the dismissal of this case.

The lawyers said they agreed that each of the parties shall bear their own attorneys fees and court costs.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recused from the case.

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Alex Kozinski on Dec. 29 designated Seabright, District Judge for the District of Hawaii, to preside over the case.

Quitugua filed the lawsuit in May 2010. She accused Palms Resort of "terminating her employment in an unlawful, discriminatory manner on a pretext of implementing organizational and staffing charges."

Quitugua began working for the hotel as a front office supervisor in 1998 and was later promoted to senior assistant front office manager in 2007. She held on to that position until her termination in January 2009.

Palms Resort's management had asserted that Quitugua's termination was simply necessitated by business restructuring. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

DUE TO BAD LOANS, LOW RATE OF RETURNS:

Fund to sell member home loan program

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund will sell its member home loan program to relieve it from the "burden" of handling the program which it says has been yielding low rate of investment return, high delinquency ratio, and other concerns.

The Fund's board of trustees during its meeting Friday said the option was decided after extensive assessment of the program in the committee level.

The matter, they revealed, has also been on the board's table for quite some time but never been acted upon formally.

The member home loan program is among the four local investments of the Fund, which in the past, was suspended. The agency has invested $5.5 million in this program of which a significant amount has yet been collected from borrowers.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez reported Friday that there are 106 total loans under the program of which 31 are considered bad loans or delinquents. Of these bad loans, it was disclosed that only two can be potentially collected by the agency while the rest are considered "dead accounts."

From January 2011 to November 2011, Villagomez reported that cash flow from the program was $639,000 which is equivalent to only 7.91 percent return from portfolio. Although he reported that some of the delinquency loans are still making payments for its cash flow, there are "aging receivables" that have yet been resolved.

He said a request for proposal is being prepared for the formal board announcement of the board's intention to find a buyer. The board is expected to formally adopt the RFP in their next board meeting.

Villagomez did not disclose the amount that may not be collected from the bad accounts, but based on the records last year, bad loans amounted to nearly $800,000 as of December 2010. The Fund failed to generate the expected revenues because collection effort was hampered by the current economic situation.

In July 2010, the board reopened the program with the infusion of $1 million as revolving fund in the hopes that it may help the agency in paying for its other obligations.

The home loan program allows a short-term loan payment. Despite the suspension of the member home loan program, the Fund earlier confirmed that a significant number of existing borrowers have sought assistance to the agency—not in the form of payment deferment but through reduction of loan interest that continue to drag them down. The suspension of the program was also an advice of the Fund's former investment consultant Wilshire Consulting.

Board chair Sixto K. Igisomar, during a break in the meeting Friday, disclosed that the board had tried several steps to save the program but it seems only things left to do is outsource or sell the entire portfolio, probably to a bank."

"Historically, there are issues about the program and we're trying to balance the cost associated to this program. Although there are great benefits to members, there were also some challenges and areas that the Fund believes require its attention," he said.

Igisomar said the decision to sell the portfolio is also due to the intention of the board to focus on the pension program. He revealed that the Fund's counsels, for many years, have also been facing huge tasks of addressing issues for the home loan program such as foreclosures, demand letters, and other notices.

LEADERSHIP MEETING HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan), right, convenes a leadership meeting in his conference room on Capital Hill on Thursday, five days after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial reported to the Legislature a $25.8 million budget deficit in fiscal year 2011. The Legislature was among the agencies which overspent their allotment and despite many lawmakers' yearlong pronouncements about doing everything to help revive the economy, only one of the 40 bills that became law in calendar year 2011 was actually aimed at revenue-generation.

20 percent across-the-board cut on Fund budget's eyed

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund may be forced to reduce its personnel cost after the board of trustees received a recommendation to cut the agency's operational budget due to limited resources.

The Fund's finance and personnel committees have recommended a 20-percent cut on the pension agency's personnel cost and all others to reflect its declining revenue.

Board chair Sixto Igisomar said Friday that although he is not against any budget reduction, he asked the committees to carefully look at all areas of operations to ensure that important services to the retirees will be maintained.

He said since he assumed the chairmanship, his leadership has initiated some internal austerity measures in an effort to save on the Fund's operating budget.

Igisomar admitted that despite these efforts, "more pressures" have been received by the Fund to implement more cuts.

Desk audits conducted last year were also in relation to this budget planning.

Igisomar hinted that personnel may be primarily affected by the proposed 20-percent cut which will be finalized once a comprehensive analysis is done by the committees.

"I am not against any budget cuts. What I am saying is, make sure it is reviewed properly to really balance the service that is demanded by the retirees," he said.

Igisomar said included in the agency's personnel cost are the fees for the investment consultant, actuary consultant, money managers, and professional services. But because they left since the passage of beneficiaries derivative law in September, the committees are looking into this as among the areas that could be "saved" or streamlined for now.

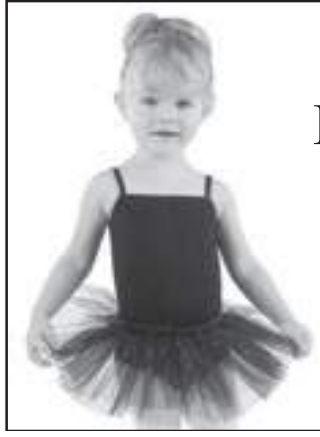
Fund officials have earlier claimed that the agency is operating with a limited workforce contrary to what many retirees believe that it employs excessive count of personnel onboard.

In 2007, it was revealed that over 50 employees were working for the Fund when it registered over $500 million in investment portfolio. This figure was reduced significantly, with only 27 total employees as of July 2011.

Saipan Tribune learned that for these employees, the Fund paid $1.2 million in personnel cost which include benefits, health, and life insurances. For the money managers, service fees amount to about $2 million last fiscal year which include the professional fee for its consultant.

Last Friday, Fund administrator Richard Villagomez reported that they are still reviewing the agency's crisis management plan which identifies ways on how the agency could generate some savings.

Saipan Tribune learned that among these are the proposal to shutdown offices on Rota and Tinian and the privatization and outsourcing of the Fund's other services.

Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts

OUR 10th YEAR on SAIPAN!
Ballet Classes
for All Ages from 3 years old to Adults
We offer Family Discounts!
Call 483-6271,
to enroll or arrange for FREE TRIAL or send an e-mail: glushkosacademy@yahoo.com
We are located on the 2nd floor of Marianas Business Plaza
Check our page on Facebook!

Blurry Vision?
"Come See!"
at
Marianas Eye Institute
Blurry vision can be cause by simple eye problems, and in most cases, treated successfully.
Get your care at the clinic that has been recognized by Retinal Physician magazine as "one of the best-equipped in Asia-Pacific"
See doctors who have received national recognition
We Help You See Your Best
Mark Robertson, OD
Magna Cum Lade
Specializing in Diabetic Retinopathy Evaluation
Comprehensive Medical Eye Care
Vision Care
David Khorram, MD
America's Top Ophthalmologists
Specializing in Retinal and Diabetic Eye Disease
Advance Cataract Surgery with Lens Implant
Complex Eye Disease
Marianas Eye Institute
"Where Technology Meets Talent"
235-9090
Beach Road, Garapan
www.MarianasEye.com
One-Hour Glasses • Contacts • Medical Eye Care
Advance Surgery and Laser
We accept: Aetna, Staywell, Moylan's, TakeCare, Medicaid, Medicare, Calvos' and more.
If you can't pay for your care, the Eye Foundation Fund helps cover your costs.

VISIT YTT GOLD Jewelry 元通金行 TODAY

Exchange your unwanted, damage, outdated and worn gold for CASH!
■ Bring any GOLD items to our store in Garapan
■ Our Consultants will test and value you GOLD items
■ We will give you CASH on the spot!
Tel. No.: 233-2368 | Business Hours: 10:00am - 8:00pm | Sunday Closed
Located behind Duty Free and Star Sands Plaza
GARAPAN, BEACH ROAD
HARD ROCK CAFE | DFS GALERIA | CAR PARK | STAR SANDS PLAZA
D'ELEGANCE CAFE | CAR PARK | GOLD

TAX

From Page 1

biweekly basis," Larson told *Saipan Tribune*. "We also release smaller batches of checks in between to accommodate emergency requests."

Larson said the latest release of tax rebate/refund checks was Wednesday last week.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos has asked for taxpayers' patience waiting for their checks because of revenue shortfall and other priorities such as public health, public safety, and utilities services.

Eireen Gelera, 39, said she and her husband have been checking their mailbox since December, hoping to find a check in the mail to help with household expenses especially during the holidays.

"But Christmas and New Year came and went and there's still no check," said Gelera in an interview on Saturday at a laundry shop in Dandan.

The mother of two said the check will help her family make ends meet, especially because she lost her job just last year and her husband is the only one working.

"We had a joint filing for 2010 but for 2011, my husband will be the only one to file. When they announced in October that checks will be released, we thought we'd be able to receive ours before Christmas," Gelera added.

Remy N., 39, said she's only expecting a federal stimulus check of some $400 because she knew she has no tax refund.

"There's an emergency in the family and I was hoping the federal stimulus check could help, but it didn't come just in time. I guess we just have to be patient," she said.

Other taxpayers hope to get their 2010 tax rebate/refund checks before they start filing their 2011 income tax returns in April.

The Fitial administration said checks will be released up to early this year.

A refund is for tax that has been overpaid or incorrectly paid, and is returned to the taxpayer, while rebate is for tax properly paid and is subsequently returned to the taxpayer under a rebate provision.

NMI

From Page 1

Buckingham cited "irreparable injury" to the CNMI caused by allowing jobless aliens to remain in the CNMI and become economic burdens.

"These economic burdens delay the start and slow the path of CNMI recovery from the current economic depression. The days, months, and years lost in our economic recovery because of the unemployed aliens remaining in the Commonwealth will never be regained," Buckingham said, responding to *Saipan Tribune* questions.

The lawsuit is set to be filed this week.

It names as respondents DHS, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services director Alejandro Mayorkas.

USCIS is one of the component agencies under DHS that handles immigration benefits.

The filing of a lawsuit comes weeks after the governor asked the AG to review the status and legal issues related to USCIS not completing a case-by-case review by Nov. 27, 2011.

Buckingham said USCIS, days before the Nov. 27 deadline "and without prior notice or consultation to the Commonwealth," announced that it would simply allow thousands of unemployed nonresidents to remain in the CNMI under a claim of parole power.

"This was not done on a 'case-by-case' basis," Buckingham said.

The AG said "apparently USCIS action proceeded on the basis that a new law would come into effect."

He was referring to Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan's pending H.R. 1466 which seeks a grant of CNMI-only resident status to four groups of people including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens regardless of the age of the U.S. citizen.

Buckingham said the CNMI's position is that decisions made today must be made consistent with the laws of today.

"One understands that there may be a belief that a law will change tomorrow. But, that does not change what one should do—today. In this case, not only did 'tomorrow' not come, but there seems a low likelihood that a law proposing a large influx of individuals who would otherwise not be permitted to enter U.S. soil will be passed," he said.

Sablan said USCIS or DHS won't make a decision when they don't have the authority to do so.

Bonifacio Sagana, president of Dekada Movement, said yesterday that the individuals eligible to receive a parole valid until Dec. 31, 2012 have not only invested years helping to build the CNMI economy but will try their best to regain employment once they receive a parole from USCIS.

Sagana said once parole is granted, these nonresidents will be able to apply for authorization for employment document, or AED, so they can work and feed their own family.

"Filing a lawsuit will just create another set of problems. These individuals are just waiting for their parole so they can apply for employment authorization. It will not be forever that they will be jobless. I hope we just help one another, and not fight each other. I hope the government will focus on improving the economy, for example, to help everyone," he added.

Rabby Syed, president of United Workers Movement-NMI, said yesterday that while the AG or the CNMI government has every right to sue, he thinks the lawsuit against DHS is unnecessary.

Syed also said the granting of parole is on a case-by-case basis because one has to apply for it, and DHS will review each case before making any decision.

'Thousands of jobless aliens'

The Fitial administration said as of November 2011, there are "potentially thousands of unemployed aliens in the CNMI.

This is because it estimates 20,000 aliens residing in the CNMI, but only over 11,000 of them are employed or with pending Commonwealth-only worker status, and those holding status as immediate relatives of the employed, investors, or students.

Buckingham said in November 2009, the CNMI Department of Labor counted all aliens in the Commonwealth by issuing "umbrella permits" that allowed aliens to remain in the Commonwealth pending the issuance of federal regulations that would govern work permits.

Over 19,000 umbrella permits were issued, he said.

"The Commonwealth estimates that the Department of Homeland Security received about 11,300 permit applications before the Nov. 27, 2011 deadline. Nov. 27, 2011 was the date by which all employers of aliens had to submit applications to begin or continue the employment of those aliens. This date was known two years in advance," the AG said.

HR 1466

Buckingham reiterated the Fitial administration's opposition to Sablan's HR 1466.

Shortly before a voice vote on the bill in mid-December, Fitil contacted congressional leadership to urge them to oppose HR 1466 on five grounds, including it being an "amnesty" bill and does not promote "fairness."

"The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was a temporary home to people who arrived to provide low cost ($3.05 an hour) contract labor to a garment industry not departed from the island. With the end of work there should have been the end of time spent on U.S. soil. Instead, efforts are now underway to create over 11,000 individuals who would never have been admitted to the United States," the AG said.

He said Congress responded with a cancellation of the voice vote.

"HR 1466, accordingly, is not law. For USCIS to change its policies in reliance on a non-passed bill is improper. Instead, USCIS should have followed existing law, limited applications to those submitted in accordance with the USCIS deadline of Nov. 27, 2011 and proceeded expeditiously to review and decide on the 11,300 cases with submitted applications," Buckingham said.

He also said HR 1466 was created and sold with inaccuracy/dishonesty.

"Congressman Sablan claims HR 1466 will affect just a few people (under 3,500). The reality is that HR 1466 will impact over 10,000 people and will be used as a blueprint for 'amnesty' efforts in mainland states," Buckingham said.

He also said these aliens will harm the economy. He said former contract workers now compete for scarce jobs and cause local wages to remain artificially low.

"The population covered by HR 1466 (is) not 'skilled labor.' They were willing to travel thousands of miles to work at $3.05 per hour. They will remain, low-skilled and desperate until the immigration law is enforced," he said.

Buckingham said U.S. citizens suffer from unfair competition. Companies will not consider hiring U.S. citizens for low-skilled positions when they have a labor pool of thousands readily available. This prevents the CNMI economy from growing, he said.

Lastly, he said passing HR 1466 sets the stage for more demands, more amnesty and less integrity in the U.S. immigration system. The harm caused by HR 1466 will not be limited to the Commonwealth, he added.

But Sablan has been saying that his bill does not provide amnesty.

Syed, for his part, said long-term aliens in the CNMI who entered legally and have legally worked for years should be treated differently from the estimated 11.5 million illegal aliens in the U.S. mainland. Syed continues to press Congress to grant "green card" or pathway to citizenship to long-term alien workers in the CNMI.

'Improper'

Buckingham said the law and the regulatory framework required that "case-by-case" reviews be done on or before Nov. 27, 2011.

"Instead of completing its work, USCIS has, by unilateral action, sought to nearly double the number of aliens allowed to remain on US soil. The Commonwealth rejects this action as improper and unsupported by law. Worse, there is no limit to this extension. There is no certainty that USCIS will not, at a future date, yet again continue the December, 2012 date to some future date," he said.

The AG also said in the meantime, thousands now improperly remain on U.S. soil.

He said these aliens contribute to the following problems:

1. Illegal work deprives U.S. citizens of jobs and uses enforcement time. Unemployed aliens work at illegal part-time or fluctuating-time jobs. They are paid substandard wages well below the minimum wage and no overtime. They are preyed upon by those who require them to participate in illegal businesses, threaten to expose them to the authorities and often collect bribes. Employers refuse to hire U.S. citizens when cheap illegal labor is abundant. The CNMI has only seven labor enforcement officers who cannot keep up with this tide of illegal work.

2. Unemployment among U.S. citizens is already high. More pressure from illegal work by unemployed aliens forces more U.S. citizens to emigrate to Guam or the States to find employment.

3. Unfair competition causes legitimate businesses to close. The enterprises that hire aliens illegally typically pay no U.S. or CNMI taxes, have no worker's compensation, pay no medical or other benefits, and dump workers as soon as they are unable to work. This gives these enterprises a significant cost advantage over legitimate businesses.

4. Public safety costs increase. Petty crime such as copper wire thefts, drug selling, and burglaries increase, causing losses suffered by citizens and aliens working legally.

5. Health care costs increase. The CNMI's share of health care costs for indigents rises swiftly as the numbers of indigents presenting themselves at the CNMI's only hospital increase. Sanitation decreases as illegal housing and illegal businesses grow, leading to more health problems.

6. Public utility revenues are lost and costs increase. Illegal housing and illegal businesses often involve illegal hookups to water and electric services.

7. Social services costs increase. Unemployed aliens crowd the food stamp rolls and when ceilings are reached, local U.S. citizens cannot receive aid as no new recipients can be added to the rolls. Distressed aliens who have been abused in illegal work situations, often by foreign employers, seek help. Private social service organizations run out of resources and are not available to assist local U.S. citizens.

8. Judicial system costs increase. Petty crime and illegal work cases add to the burdens of local courts.

9. Environmental damage increases. Illegal housing and illegal businesses are often accompanied by illegal waste disposal and illegal dumping. Illegal employment includes illegal hunting and fishing.

Buckingham said it is extremely difficult to develop, and maintain, a productive economy in a small island community like the CNMI.

He said the CNMI has neither the natural nor human resources to produce either the capital or the labor force necessary to support a viable economy providing the services and the standard of living that its United States citizens have every right to expect under the Covenant.

"The Commonwealth will be able to confront the economic challenges of the next several years only if it is not burdened by the exercise of the parole power by the Department of Homeland Security in a way that leaves in the Commonwealth with a relatively large number of otherwise illegal aliens compared to the Commonwealth's population of U.S. citizens and U.S. nationals as no State on the mainland is burdened," he added.

Florida-based human rights activist and former CNMI teacher Wendy Doromal said Buckingham "will lose" in the lawsuit.

Doromal said many of the present day foreign workers did not come to work in the CNMI as factory workers but were hired to work in hotels and restaurants, as engineers, accountants, construction workers, beauticians, nurses, teachers. and numerous other positions.

"The majority of the foreign contract workers who lost their jobs between the time the umbrella permits were issued and the DHS Final Rule was released applied for humanitarian parole. If that parole was granted they remain legal and there is nothing that the CNMI government can do about that. Immigration is a federal issue," she said.

JUSTICE

From Page 1

and Manglona is the acting chief justice," Stowell told *Saipan Tribune.*

When Miguel S. Demapan, citing health reasons, retired as chief justice last September, Castro served as acting chief justice.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has yet to announce his nomination for the new chief justice.

Castro ascended to the Supreme Court bench on July 9, 1998. In 2005, voters retained him to the high court's bench.

Castro and Superior associate judges David A. Wiseman and Perry B. Inos will be up for retention election this November.

6 students win in Mathcourt regionals, advance to nationals

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Six students earned spots on the trip to Kansas City, Missouri in May this year after winning the regional Mathcourt competition last Saturday at the Saipan Southern High School.

This year's CNMI team for the national Mathcourt tilt is composed of gold medalist Han Byol Yun, silver medal awardee Manatsu Omori, and bronze winner Jessica Lee. All three hail from Marianas Baptist Academy.

Joining them in the team are fourth and fifth placers Won Woo Choi and Hyun Bin Hwang from MBA and SSHS, respectively.

Also included in the national team is Dong Gu Hyon, the gold medalist in the middle school division.

Dora Miura, coordinator for the Mathcourt competition for 6th-12th grade division, disclosed Saturday that the regional contest yielded 40 participants from private and public high schools. Finalists were ribbon and medal winners in the first three preliminary rounds conducted since October.

The CNMI team will be coached by Manny Borja who will conduct a weekly training program for the team members in preparation for the national event.

The league championship is slated for May 13. This is the third time that the Commonwealth is sending delegates to the national Mathcourt competition. The first time was in 2010 when the contest was held in Las Vegas.

"We did better in the first year and we got little individual trophies last year so we hope to do that again. We're aiming for more and higher placing this year," Miura said, adding that since Mathcourt was established on island, she has seen a vast improvement on the students' mathematical skills and has received positive feedback from student themselves.

Miura said it is their goal to help sharpen the students' skills in Math and for those who love the subject, to help them sustain it. The contest is also an avenue for young Mathletes to shine.

Gold winner Han Byol Yun told *Saipan Tribune* that she's excited for the group's upcoming trip and is looking forward to another fun and exciting experience from the competition. This year marks the 12th grader's third time to the national event.

Throughout the years, she considered Mathcourt as a big challenge.

"The questions they gave us are for higher level and you can actually challenge yourself. I am glad that I became part of this competition because I know it will help me in college," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Silver medal awardee Manatsu Omori, who has been in the national team for the past three years, said he is looking forward to another fun and exciting experience.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

CNMI team members for the national Mathcourt competition gather for a group photo with their coach and coordinators during the regional contest Saturday at Saipan Southern High School. The group is composed of Han Byol Yun, Manatsu Omori, Jessica Lee, Won Woo Choi, Hyun Bin Hwang, and Dong Gu Hyon.

Omori said Mathcourt changes his perception about the subject and motivates him to do better in the field. "Last year we did pretty well on the rounds, so I hope to bring some more trophies back here," he said.

For Jessica Lee, joining Mathcourt events here and abroad is very rewarding.

"It's very honoring. Math is always been very challenging for me so I always tried my best. This is my last year in the competition and for me it's very rewarding," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Team members said the opportunity to travel abroad and compete in the Mathcourt nationals bring not only worthwhile experiences to them but a chance to compete with young Mathletes from other states. The national event, they added, also opens their minds to the exciting world of Mathematics, help them improve, and bring them more opportunities for their future.

For the non-regional competition, participants went through three categories (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry) and questions were developed using the Public School System benchmarks. Last Saturday, finalists in the regional contest went through four different rounds: sprint, target, relay, and team rounds during the four-hour competition.

Named alternates to the CNMI team to the nationals are SSHS' Hye Young Oh; MBA's Jittoon Choi; MBA's Young Eun Lee; Eucon International School's Purity Zhang; and Northern Marianas Academy's Sung Hoon Ham.

I started Smart.
I started at NMC.
You, too, can start smart by saving money (versus moving off island for the first two years), learning from highly trained and educated faculty, and transferring your credits when you're ready to transition to a 4-year university.
Enroll this Spring Semester and start your way toward a degree in education, business, nursing, hospitality management, liberal arts, criminal justice, or natural resource management.
Spring 2012 Semester Dates
Registration
January 10 to 13, 2012
(Visit www.nmcnet.edu for registration schedule by Power Campus ID)
Student Orientation for International Students
January 6, 2012
9:30am to 4:00pm
Student Center, Building J
Student Orientation
January 12, 2012
1st Session: 9am to 12pm
2nd Session: 4pm to 7pm
NMC Library, Building O
Late Registration
January 17 to 20, 2012
First Day for Spring Classes
January 17, 2012
English Placement Test
(Held in the English Lab, Bldg. M):
Jan 3 (Tue) 9am-4pm
Jan 4 (Wed) 9am-6pm
Jan 5 (Thu) 9am-6pm
Jan 6 (Fri) 9am-2pm
Jan 9 (Mon) 9am-4pm
Jan 10 (Tue) 9am-6pm
Jan 11 (Wed) 9am-6pm
Jan 12 (Thu) 9am-4pm
Jan 13 (Fri) 9am-2pm
(Appointments recommended, please call the Languages & Humanities Dept. at 234-5498 ext. 2017/2009)
Math Placement Tests
(Held in Bldg. A, Room 9):
Jan 3 (Tue) 10am-12pm
Jan 5 (Thu) 10am-12pm or 5pm-7pm
Jan 10 (Tue) 10am-12pm
Jan 12 (Thu) 10am-12pm or 5pm-7pm
For more information, log on to www.nmcnet.edu or contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 234-5498 ext. 1528.
For the latest news and announcements, follow NMC on Facebook: www.facebook.com/NMC.Proa
NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
NMC
1981
Chanelle Mendiola
Nursing Major

Woman indicted for allegedly stealing alien workers' USCIS filing fees

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A federal grand jury has indicted a woman on the same mail fraud charges in which she was arrested last August but the case was eventually dismissed.

The indictment charged Maria Nina Dolot Castro with eight counts of mail fraud, four counts of altering a postal money order, and for counts of passing or uttering an altered postal money order.

According to the indictment filed on Thursday in the U.S. District Court for the NMI, through her scheme of stealing clients' payments for professional services and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) filing fees, Castro defrauded clients and her employers of approximately $27,000.

The Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar operated on Saipan and assisted non-U.S. citizens in petitioning or applying for immigration benefits for themselves and or their family members as one of its services.

In August 2010, the business' assets were purchased and employees hired by BDC Consultancy, LLC, a Saipan-based visa processing company, after Aguilar was suspended from the practice of law.

Castro was employed by Aguilar and BDC as an administrative assistant. She personally collected payments from clients for professional services and application filing fees.

Beginning October 2009 and continuing on Jan. 5, 2011, the defendant allegedly devised a scheme to obtain money by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises.

As part of her scheme, Castro allegedly falsely assured clients during initial meetings with statements to the effect that they need not worry and that she would "take care of everything."

Castro allegedly intentionally provided clients with the offices' document receipts at the time of payment and converted clients' cash payments to her own use.

The defendant allegedly cashed clients' postal money orders at local banks by falsely writing her name in as the payee and endorsing the back, or use their money orders to send funds to her family members in the Philippines by falsely writing LBC (remittance company) in as the payee and herself as payor.

Castro allegedly withheld from mailing clients' applications to USCIS, or in some cases, never mail their applications at all, because of her theft of the filing fees.

Castro allegedly used postal money orders provided by clients for their own immigration applications, or the applications of their family members, to replace filing fees she had previously stolen.

The defendant allegedly responded to clients' email inquiries into the status of their applications by falsely claiming they had been mailed to USCIS; or that the applications had been mistakenly sent to the wrong address and returned; or that the client needed to sign a new form now required by USCIS; or would make similar false representations.

Castro allegedly responded to clients' in-person inquiries into the status of their applications by deceptively showing them USPS tracking numbers which had been used for other clients' mailings to USCIS or copies of cashed postal money orders, such as ones made out to "USCIS" from "The Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar" which had been used for other clients' filing fees.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested Castro last August for mail fraud after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security conducted investigation into complaints from several persons that their applications and fees for federal immigration benefits were not being filed by Aguilar's law firm with the USCIS.

Castro was immediately released on a $5,000 unsecured bond, but under some conditions.

In October or two months later, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted the U.S. government's motion to dismiss without prejudice the criminal complaint against Castro.

Dismissal without prejudice will allow the prosecution to re-file a new case on the same claim in the future.

Assistant U.S. Attorney James Benedetto in the motion to dismiss said the prosecution determined that there are additional victims that need to be identified before this case is prosecuted and additional investigation needs to be conducted.

In addition, Benedetto said, he has been informed that Castro will be charged in the Superior Court with associated crimes.

PROPERTY TRANSFER CLARISSA V. DAVID

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, right, hands over a warranty deed to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta in a ceremony at the Commonwealth Health Center conference room last Friday. The deed transfers 38,500 square meters of public land at the corner of Navy Hill Road and Middle Road to healthcare corporation. The transferred property is expected to generate revenue for the public hospital.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-12-005

PROCUREMENT & INSTALLATION OF LED STREET LIGHTS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified and experienced firms for the procurement and installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) under the AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA).

The Bid Packet may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card, in the amount of $100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2012 at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.10, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-12-005, Procurement and Installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 19, 2012 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety firm holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety firm must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety firm must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers questions, concerns and qualification be should handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

The bidder is required to submit a copy of his CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page – http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm. The contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 9, 2012 to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Alfredo Palattao, Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Ms. Janina Mika Muna, Administrative Assistant, Procurement & Supply via mika.muna@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE
Executive Director

Defunct garment factory denies US govt claim that $1.2M refund check was erroneously issued

A defunct garment manufacturer has denied the U.S. government's counterclaim that the $1.2 million in a tax refund check that the Internal Revenue Service issued to the factory in 2009 was erroneous.

Attorney Steven P. Pixley, counsel for Concorde Garment Manufacturing Corp., has admitted that Concorde received a refund or payments made to the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) as alleged in one of the U.S. government's counterclaim.

In Concorde's reply to U.S. government's counterclaim, Pixley also asserted that the counterclaim is time barred by the applicable statute of limitations.

Pixley has asserted in its lawsuit that the imposition of FICA tax liability on employees and employers in the CNMI is without legal authority and that the FICA tax collected from plaintiffs should be refunded.

In July 2011, Concorde and numerous Chinese nationals formerly employed by Concorde and its affiliated companies, sued the U.S. government to recover allegedly wrongfully assessed FICA taxes that were erroneously paid to the U.S. for tax years 2004 to 2007.

The plaintiffs, through counsels Steven P. Pixley and Colin M. Thompson, said that, on Dec. 15, 2008, Concorde received $1,157,359.71 representing a partial refund of FICA taxes.

Pixley and Thompson said the U.S. commenced collection proceedings against Concorde to recover this refund after April 15, 2010, including the implementation of illegal levy proceedings.

"Notwithstanding the partial FICA refund payment, the Defendant (U.S.) has not issued a formal denial relating to the plaintiffs' refund claims," the lawyers said.

Last December, the U.S. government filed a counterclaim against Concorde.

The U.S. government, through the U.S. Department of Justice's Tax Division, asserted that Concorde is indebted to the government in the amount of $1,181,265.71 plus interest as provided by law from the date of the erroneous refund on Dec. 28, 2009.

DOJ said the refund check was erroneous, because, among other things, the claim for refund was without legal basis and should not have been allowed.

The U.S., through IRS, collected FICA tax in the CNMI on employers and "wages" of employees for "employment."

Last year, 12 other former garment factories and Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino also sued the U.S. government to recover allegedly wrongfully assessed Social Security and Medicare taxes (FICA) that were erroneously paid between 2002 to 2007. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

‘Localization initiative should come from the elected officials’

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Longtime businessman Anthony Pellegrino called on elected officials in the CNMI to direct people to work more toward “localization” to achieve economic success.

“You got to show that you lead by example,” Pellegrino told *Saipan Tribune* after the screening of *The Economics of Happiness*, the featured documentary film at the First Friday Films shown at the American Memorial Park last Jan. 6.

A film by Helena Norberg-Hodge, Steven Gorelick, and John Page, *The Economics of Happiness* “offers not only a big-picture analysis of globalization, but a powerful message of hope for the future. The thinkers and activists we interviewed for the film… argue that a systemic shift—away from globalizing economic activity and toward the local—is an almost magic formula that allows us to reduce our ecological footprint while increasing human well-being.”

Pellegrino pointed out that the Commonwealth has vast resources that it can utilize and bring income to the community. He said that if people can line up for food stamps, then they could also spend time working on these natural resources.

But Pellegrino noted that it would be difficult to change the mindsets of the people, and this is where the role of the government, particularly the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the Legislature, comes in.

“Let’s motivate our own people,” Pellegrino said, adding that the government should encourage the community to do productive activities like farming rather than “parasitic” pursuits such as gambling.

Pellegrino expressed optimism that endeavors such as the Cargo Air Bridge, which aims to stimulate the local agricultural industry through its cargo airline called Arctic Circle, would have a multiplier effect that would help get the CNMI out of its current economic situation.

Presently, Pellegrino disclosed that there are about five farmers who plant tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, cucumbers, and papaya that have already signed a contract with Cargo Air Bridge and made a commitment to supply Cargo Air Bridge which would then distribute the produce to markets in Guam.

Pellegrino said they are expecting the purchased aircraft to arrive by the end of the month or early February, adding that strict federal regulations have caused the slight delay in starting off their operations.

Joeten-Kiyu application for E-Rate subsidies OK’d

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Library patrons on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will soon have access to higher speed Internet services after the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library recently got approval for a grant application for E-Rate telecommunications subsidies.

JKPL executive director John Oliver Gonzales said Thursday that CNMI’s state public library has been awarded its request of $36,247.93 at 90-percent level for program year July 2011 to June 2012 by the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund or USF.

Administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company, USF helps provide communities across the country with affordable telecommunications services through its programs for high cost companies serving rural areas, low-income consumers, rural health care providers, and schools and libraries.

USAC is an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated as the administrator of the federal USF by the Federal Communications Commission.

The approved request, Gonzales said, means JKPL would only need to pay for the remaining 10 percent of the program year.

“We are awaiting official notification from USAC through receipt of the Funding Commitment Decision Letter, which was effectively issued on Jan. 4, 2012 according to the online application status display,” Gonzales told *Saipan Tribune.*

Once they receive the notification, Gonzales said they will schedule their information technology staff to visit and install Internet services at Tinian and Rota’s public libraries, including their facility on Saipan and the Bookmobile service for offsite patrons as well.

Gonzales said they will coordinate with the mayors of Rota and Tinian for the public libraries in their respective municipalities.

He disclosed that JKPL used to avail of the E-Rate grant program until 2006 when the former management was not able to renew the grant’s annual online application.

When he came on board in 2009, Gonzales pledged to restore the grant, consulting and collaborating with E-Rate pioneers who are former Public School System staff like Louise Sablan Concepcion, Nick Sablan, Norman Okamura, and Joe W. Torres.

The executive director noted that restoring E-Rate subsidies is “timely and welcome” to “augment the dwindling local resources we face.”

“E-Rate subsidies will go a long way in our continuing quality improvement efforts to upgrade our level of public library services toward efficiency and optimum quality,” he said.

Gonzales added that he will “proactively” pursue outside funding sources and “meaningful collaboration” with community partners “to continually brand and upgrade” services for all library patrons on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET MEETING MONETH G. DEPOSA

Members of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. board discuss the financial standing of the hospital during a recent special meeting. The corporation later approved the submission of a $38.5 million supplemental budget for fiscal year 2012 to the Legislative.

CNMI Water Task Force
IFB12-GOV-035

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting Sealed Bids from qualified individuals or firms for the lease of a warehouse on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The procurement specifications and special terms and conditions will be available at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan on or after **January 9, 2012**.

All questions regarding this Invitation for Bids shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 PM, **January 20, 2012** to Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, at facsimile number (670) 664-2279.

Sealed Bids must be marked “**Lease of Warehouse”, IFB12-GOV-035**. An original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan no later than **2:00 P.M. , local time, on February 7, 2012** at which time Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

This procurement is made in accordance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Bid procedures shall be in full compliance with Article 3, Part A, Section 3-102 of the Regulations. Preference is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs. Award of a contract is contingent upon approval from DOI/OIA.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All Bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/Benigno R. Fitial
Governor

/s/Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI)

NMPASI seeks comments and/or suggestions on how to improve upon its proposed Statement of Goals & Priorities for fiscal year 2012. In general, NMPASI proposes to carry-out the following goals and priorities for FY 2012:

STATEMENT OF GOALS AND PRIORITIES
(FY 2012)

GOAL 1: To ensure that individuals with disabilities in institutional and/or community settings (1) are not subject to *abuse/neglect*, (2) are *free from discrimination*, (3) are provided with an a*ppropriate education*, (4) are provided appropriate *health care services*, and (5) are provided with opportunities to make *informed decisions* about their lives as *independent, contributing members of the community.*

Priority 1.1: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel will provide direct representation for program eligible persons with disabilities by conducting intervention strategies of reported cases of abuse and/or neglect to include, but not be limited to, short-term assistance, investigations, technical assistance, administrative remedies, negotiation /mediation, and/or legal remedies;

Priority 1.2: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel *will collaborate with other programs, agencies and/or people in the community to* deliver and ensure protection and advocacy services to unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.

Priority 1.3: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel *will collaborate with other programs, agencies and/or people in the community to* conduct and/or facilitate trainings related to the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities, to people with disabilities, their families and/or other members of the community;

Priority 1.4: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel *will collaborate with other programs, agencies and/or people in the community to* disseminate information relating to the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities to the community at large to include but not limited to using local media and/or other mediums for information dissemination;

Priority 1.5: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel will provide Information & Referral and/or Technical Assistance to interested individuals about issues relating to the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities in institutional and/or community settings; and

Priority 1.6: In fiscal year 2012, P&A personnel will receive training and education in order to *increase and improve the quality* of protection and advocacy services on behalf of individuals with disabilities in the CNMI.

NMPASI, a local non-profit organization, administers grant funds from the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**/Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), and the Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the **U.S. Department of Education (DOE)**/Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the **Social Security Administration (SSA).**

For comments or suggestions, please call NMPASI office at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] or (670) 235-7275 [fax] or (670) 235-7278 [tty] or contact us via internet at www.nmpasi.org

Hawaii hit by number of endangered seal killings

HONOLULU (AP)—Two Hawaiian monk seals were found bludgeoned to death on a remote coast of Molokai—one was killed in mid-November and the other shortly before Christmas. Earlier this month, a dead seal showed up on Kauai. A fourth possible killing on Molokai is also under investigation.

No one knows who is killing the seals—a critically endangered species—or why.

But the deaths are coming as the federal government steps up its efforts to protect the seals, leading to simmering resentment among some fishermen who fear new regulations will trample upon their right to fish. The killings are also happening as the misguided notion spreads that the animals aren't native to Hawaii and don't belong here.

"It's really serious. This attitude, this negative attitude toward the seals has overpowered the concern that this is a species that's going to become extinct," said Walter Ritte, a Molokai resident and longtime activist who has sounded an alarm about the killings.

Like pandas, the seals are adored by many humans for being cute, though their lazy demeanor and pudgy appearance belies the strength of a wild animal. Also like pandas, the animal is dangerously close to disappearing. There are only 1,100 left in the world, and scientists say the seal is on course to vanish in 50 to 100 years.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration last year proposed two initiatives to give the seals a better shot at surviving.

One would temporarily bring a few seals from the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands—where competition for food and predators mean only a dismal 20 percent of seal pups live to be adults—to the main Hawaiian Islands.

There aren't as many sharks to prey on seal pups, or large fish to compete with seal pups for food, around Kauai, Oahu, Maui and other places in the main Hawaiian Islands. This gives seals in this area, which is also where the state's 1.4 million people live, an 80 percent chance of living to adulthood.

NOAA is also proposing to expand federally protected zones—or critical habitat—for the seal to include parts of the main Hawaiian Islands. Parts of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands have been designated critical habitat since the 1980s.

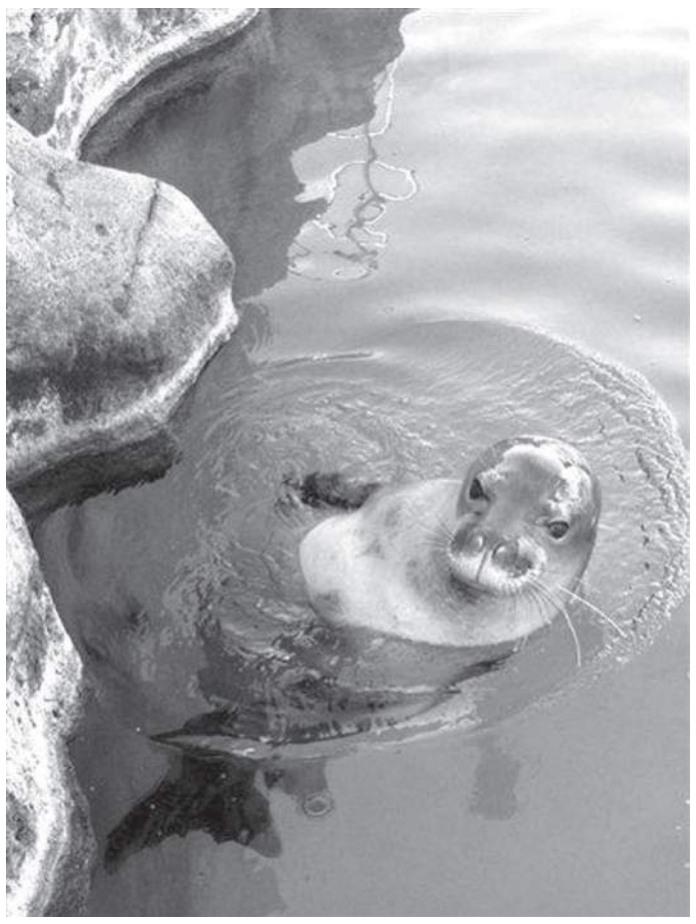
Neil Kanemoto, a lifelong recreational fisherman, said he didn't know who was killing the seals. He pointed out the last person to be convicted of killing a seal, a 78-year-old man who shot a pregnant monk seal on Kauai in 2009, was not a fisherman.

But he said fishermen and locals are unhappy with the new regulations NOAA wants, and the agency wasn't doing enough to work with local people to manage the situation. People may end up taking out their frustration on the seals, Kanemoto said.

"The point is, don't shove this down people's throats," he said. "They're making it an issue, and as a result, the poor monk seal may—I'm not saying it is—may fall victim to repercussions from locals."

He said he wouldn't be surprised of if more seals were killed.

"It's not going to end. My position is, if the feds keep pushing in this way, it's going to increase," Kanemoto said.



AP

In this Dec. 15, 2011 photo, a nearly blind, endangered Hawaiian monk seal swims at the Waikiki Aquarium in Honolulu. Hoailona, also known as KP2, has spent the past two years at a California research lab.

Ritte said part of the problem was that older people, who didn't see many seals growing up or hear about them from their elders, are spreading the word that the seals don't belong in Hawaii.

A NOAA report released last year showed 35 percent of those surveyed at beaches and popular fishing areas on Kauai and Molokai believed the seals aren't native to the islands.

This is contradicted by archaeological digs that found monk seal bones in a human trash pit dating between the 15th and 18th centuries. The Hawaiian creation chant, the Kumulipo, also mentions a creature like a monk seal—"a rat running beside the wave."

By the early 1900s, however, most monk seals in the main Hawaiian Islands had been hunted and killed for their meat and fur. Even until a decade ago, it was rare to encounter one in the main islands.

Ritte said the seals have been showing up regularly on Molokai, a rural island of just 7,000 people, for about the past seven years. They've started to compete with subsistence fishermen who are already catching less because pollution runoff and overfishing have depleted fish stocks in the area.

The issue is serious on Molokai, where the unemployment rate hovers over 15 percent and where people get one-third of their food from hunting, fishing, and gathering.

"So here you have a fisherman. He's been walking two to three hours to get to his fishing grounds over rough terrain. And then he runs into these seals. And it causes him to get only half his catch and a quarter of his catch," Ritte said. "I think that is the essence of why."

He said the NOAA's proposals are making things worse.

"It's like fuel to the fire," he said.

NOAA says moving a few seals to the main Hawaiian Islands was the only feasible and effective way to address the high mortality rate for seals in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Further, it says critical habitats aren't intended to prevent public access to beaches and oceans. The agency says it wants to continue talking to fishermen and to address their concerns.

Ritte believes no one would kill the seals if they understood the animals have been in Hawaii for millions of years.

He said the state and federal governments and environmentalists need to get the word out quickly that the seals belong here. Usually he would say everyone should focus on educating the children, so they'll grow up knowing better. But he said that approach may not work this time.

"I don't think we have that luxury because the seals might be gone by then. So we need to hit this generation. That's going to take a lot of effort," he said.

William Aila, the head of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, said the state was preparing a monetary award for information that leads to the conviction of those responsible. He said the department would also link its website to a page with information on the deep roots monk seals have in Hawaiian tradition.

"We have a responsibility to do our part to help this species recover," he said.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday to Caroline Borja and Menchang Blas. May your days be filled with lots of love and happiness and many more wonderful years ahead for you two. We love you both forever! "Bulachoo bulachoo" from your family and friends!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday to Arisa Sakai-Peters who celebrates her birthday today, Jan. 9. May you be blessed with many more birthdays to come and here's to hoping that all your birthday dreams and wishes come true! Cheers to you and another year! Much love coming from BIG Bear, your cubs, your MG Crew, your Manta Crew, your family and friends, most especially your Guahan angel Charisma.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 9, 2001

CDA loan delinquency rate in all-time high

Slowdown in business activities during the past three years had taken its toll on the loan portfolio of the Commonwealth Development Authority which reported on Monday that delinquency rate has gone up to record-high. Although she did not disclose the specific percentage for delinquent loans, Executive Director Marylou S. Ada said the number of remiss borrowers in the last calendar year has surpassed the 20-percent mark. "It is very high. Delinquency rate was a big problem and we recognized even before that it's going to be a problem because a lot of businesses have closed down and there's too little money circulating around," Ms. Ada told reporters in an interview.

Creation of tobacco settlement trust account pushed

The House of Representatives is expected to vote by this week on the measure establishing a special account to keep money received by the CNMI under the multi-billion dollar tobacco settlement agreement. Health and Welfare Committee chair Rep. Malua T. Peter, author of HB 12-290, said the government needs the legislation to set aside the payments remitted to the islands every year for future appropriation. Ms. Peter, along with Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Antonio M. Camacho, met last week with Finance Sec. Lucy DLG Nielsen to inquire what happened to the more than $800,000 already given to the CNMI since 1999.

Jan. 9, 2002

CRM lauds garment factory

The Coastal Resources Management Office commended a garment factory for complying with its enforcement action regarding the dumping of trash on a wetland in Tanapag. CRMO acting administrator Joaquin D. Salas said the American Pacific Textile Garment Factory complied with the enforcement action that imposed fine on the company for previous improper handling of thrash. The garment factory settled the $3,000-fine imposed by the CRMO. "[The] enforcement action was taken for improper handling of thrash within the garment compound and outside the retaining wall south of the garment factory which is a wetland," Salas said in a letter to the company sent through facsimile yesterday afternoon.

Elected officials asked to file statement of assets

The Office of the Public Auditor yesterday reminded CNMI government officials that under the Government Ethics Act 8511 (c)(1), an elected Commonwealth official is required to file a Statement of Financial Interest "at the time of taking his or her oath of office." Therefore, all elected Commonwealth officials taking oath of office on January 14, 2002 are reminded to file a Statement of Financial Interest with the Office of Public Auditor by Friday, January 11, 2002. To obtain a copy of the 2001 Statement of Financial Interest form, contact the Office of Public Auditor on the 2nd Floor of the J.E. Tenorio Bldg. in Gualo Rai, or call 234-6481/2. Copies of the 2001 Statement of Financial Interest form are also available at the OPA website at www.opacnmi.com.

Jan. 9, 2003

Female-headed families low in NMI

The number of female-headed families in the Northern Marianas remains relatively low compared to the national level, according to a recent report based on Census 2000 data. The report-Children of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Results of the 2000 Census-disclosed that about 17 percent of families with children in the CNMI were headed by female householders in 2000, lower than the national level of 22 percent. However, the total number actually increased in 2000 compared to the 1990 tally, which translates to about 1,106 female-headed families throughout the Commonwealth in 2000 from only 465, or 12 percent, in 1990.

SDA students discuss teen suicide

Students of the Saipan Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School said they were not satisfied with merely learning about the high rate of teen suicides in the CNMI at the last Youth Summit meeting. They wanted to do something with their new knowledge. "We decided to do a teen suicide conference at our school after they had attended the Youth Summit," said Sean Maycock, vice principal and ninth grade teacher at SDA. "The whole thing was planned and coordinated by the students."

Zoning OKs conditional use for Navy Hill institutional housing

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Zoning Board approved on Thursday the conditional use application of an establishment that wants to operate institutional housing on island.

Application #2011-2605 of Hubion Corp. intends to operate institutional dwelling units and offices on Lots 025 D 06/07/08 in Navy Hill, which is currently zoned as Rural.

Company owners Joe Tydingco and wife Sarah were represented by Dave Sablan during Thursday night's hearing.

Sablan said the company plans to accommodate in the institutional housing visiting Korean students who will be on island for some three months during their stay.

Although the existing property had been previously used as institutional housing, acting Zoning administrator Therese T. Ogumoro noted that the company still has to apply for conditional use application since the institutional housing use had been discontinued for about a year.

Ogumoro explained that a conditional use application is needed once a non-conforming use property like that of the institutional housing had been discontinued for more than six months.

Ogumoro recommended to the board that the application be approved provided that Hubion Corp. meets the conditional requirements, including providing ample parking spaces, employing landscaping on the property to screen the parking lot, the storage area, and trash bins from public view, and complying with the stormwater management requirements of the Division of Environmental Quality.

She disclosed that the applicant submitted a revised plan that includes landscaping features, a walkway, and a parking lot that complies with accessibility standards based on the American Disabilities Act even before the conditional requirements were identified.

Board member Alice Igitol noted the need for Hubion Corp. to improve the property to ensure the safety of the visiting Korean students. The board then unanimously approved the application.

"I wish your group the best of luck," added board chair Diego Blanco.

MYWAVE CLEANUP
Marianas Youths Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically! (MYWAVE) Club members from Hopwood Junior High School joined DEQ's Cleanup Brigade and other community volunteers at Lao Lao Bay last Saturday, Jan. 7. Saipan's best all-weather dive sites, Lao Lao Bay, attracts hundreds of tourists daily. It is also a popular recreation site for island residents. In the photo are MYWAVE Club advisors Jenn Castro, Frank Angel, and Epi Cabrera, DEQ Brigade coordinator Joe Kaipat, and members of Kagman High School's JROTC.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Jury cancellation
This is to inform all prospective jurors for panels "DS" that the jury selections scheduled for today, Jan. 9, 2012, at 8:30am in Courtrooms 223A has been cancelled until further notice. For more information contact Dora SN. Decena, jury coordinator, or Kristy Diaz, deputy clerk, at telephone no. 236-9765. ***(PR)***

Air Force training on Farallon de Medinilla
Santa Rita, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

- Jan. 9 and 11, from 9am to 4pm
- Jan. 13, from 8am to 3pm

The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(USN)***

CCA board to meet today
The Commonwealth Cancer Association's board of directors will be convening its monthly meeting today, Jan. 9, 2012, at 12pm at the CCA Conference room in Gualo Rai. The agenda includes updates on Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the board's annual general membership meeting, MMAC 2012, and CCA's program manager transition. Under New Business, the board is expected to approve CCA's proposed budget for 2012, as well as reviewing CCA's standard operating procedures. All board meetings are open to the public. For more information contact the Commonwealth Cancer Association at 682-0050 or email cca@ccamarianas.org. ***(PR)***

Chamber Installation Dinner on Jan. 21
The 2012 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Officers and Directors Installation Dinner will be held this Jan. 21, 2012, at the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall. Jerry Tan, president of Tan Holdings, will be this year's keynote speaker. The Chamber will also announce its 2011 Businessperson of the Year award recipient. SCC will continue with its Installation Dinner tradition and hold a silent auction to raise funds for the Scholarship Awards Program.

The deadline for nominations for Businessperson of the Year Award has been extended to Jan. 9, 2012.

Reservations for the $50-per-head dinner are being accepted. Reserve seating for the event by calling the Saipan Chamber of Commerce offices at 233-7150/7152, or send an email to coordinator@saipanchamber.com. ***(SCC)***

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Twelfth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, Susupe, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
1) Call to Order
2) Roll Call
3) Adoption of Agenda
4) Adoption of Minutes
   a) August 25, 2011 Regular Board Meeting
   b) October 14, 2011 Special Board Meeting
   c) December 14, 2011 Special Board Meeting
   d) December 22, 2011 Regular Board Meeting

II. Public Comments[1]

III. Reports
1) Chair
2) Board Committees
   a) FPA
   b) ISA
   c) LIA
   d) CIP
   e) SEEIP
   f) SCHOOL REFORM
   g) AD HOC
3) Student Representative
4) Commissioner of Education

IV. Unfinished Business
1) Restraints & Seclusions of Students: Proposed Policy

V. New Business
1) Election of Officers
2) Appointments of Committee Chairs and Committee Assignments
3) Head Start Self-Assessment Plan for FY 2011-2012
4) Head Start Community Assessment Plan for FY 2011-2012
5) Evaluation System for Instructional Services Personnel
6) National Staff Development Council Standards
7) San Vicente Elementary School ANA Grant
8) Part B – Special Education Annual Performance Report
9) Part C – Early Intervention Annual Performance Report
10) Legal Counsel Resignation

VI. Executive Session[2]
1) Legal Updates
2) Personnel
3) Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND
1980
"Investing For The Future Financial Security Of Our Members"

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

APPROXIMATELY 14,666 SQ. FT. PRIME OFFICE SPACE

The Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund (NMIRF) is soliciting proposals to lease approximately 14,666 square feet of prime office space on the second and third floors (approximately 7000 sq.ft. per floor) of the Retirement Fund Building on Capitol Hill, Saipan. Ideally located across from the Governor's Office and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, the building has a backup generator, 24-hour water service, and ample parking space for employees and visitors. Space is available for viewing immediately.

Minimum acceptable terms include the following:

- Per square foot per month, Triple Net (higher for less than full available footage);
- Lessee responsible for own utilities, as well as cost to separately meter;
- 24 months minimum lease term; and
- First month, last month and reasonable security deposit required (amount depends on credit history and financial strength of Lessee).

All proposals are subject to acceptance by the NMIRF Board of Trustees in its sole discretion.

/s/ RICHARD S. VILLAGOMEZ
Administrator, NMI Retirement Fund

Commonwealth Cancer Association
AWARENESS•EDUCATION•HOPE

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The Commonwealth Cancer Association (CCA) is the community-based cancer support organization for the Northern Mariana Islands dedicated to eliminating cancer and saving lives by providing Advocacy, Awareness, Education, Services and HOPE for all its constituents

CCA is a non-profit organization managed by a 7 member Board of Directors who represents the diversity of the CNMI, CCA's operational funding is fully supported by contributions from corporations, families and individuals.

Position Description: Program Manager

As a Program Manager you will serve as an advocate for the CCA, supporting the CCA's mission and helping the organization better communicate who we are and what we do for the people who need us most, Eligible candidates need qualifications enabling them to fulfill the following key responsibilities:

- Manage budget and comply with stringent guidelines for program services offered to cancer patients and constituents
- Coordinate and collaborate with the Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands CNMI Representative and the CNMI Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan (CCCP) and effectively collaborate with the Program Manager to advocate and further our mission goals
- Develop, manage and grow revenue goals through multiple, fundraising events and collateral sales
- Assist the Event Chairperson(s) and participate in efficiently carrying out our signature fundraising event the "Marianas March Against Cancer", by attending Organization Committee and Team Captain meetings
- Mobilize and coordinate a CNMI community-wide volunteer working committee to implement the CNMI CCCP
- Develop and cultivate community partnerships/relationships and participate in appropriate coalitions
- Prepare/disseminate reports and publications such as an annual report, monthly performance report, bulletins, brochures, flyers, and various other promotional and educational cancer-related materials
- Assertively promote CCA Advocacy, initiatives, education and services to schools, worksites and community leaders to effectively build broad based support for our mission
- Seek monetary and in-kind donations from our business, community, private/public grants and endowments through direct solicitation, grant application and or bartering of goods and services
- Capture and track constituents served from our projects and services
- Comply and demonstrate ability to work within established budgets
- Effectively arrange monthly board meetings and other work as assigned by the President or his/her designee
- Plan ahead and always anticipate what is wanted and needed and be out in front in seeing that we meet our goals and responsibilities to the community.

Qualifications and Position Requirements:

- AA Degree and/or equivalent combination of education and experience
- Two years experience in sales, event management, customer service or volunteer management
- Demonstrated project management skills with high attention to detail and ability to multi task and delegate
- Demonstrated ability to inspire volunteers
- Strong relationship building skills
- Possess high energy, positive attitude
- Ability to maintain professional demeanor
- Must be a team player who can effectively work and interact with volunteers and the public
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Demonstrated presentation skills
- Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite more specifically MS Publisher, Adobe Photoshop or comparable software, database and spreadsheet management, e-mail software and Internet browsers
- Travel to Rota, Tinian, regional and Stateside may be required and will be funded by CCA as Contracting Party
- Evening and weekend work required

Condition of Employment and Remuneration:

- Independent Contract Agreement - At Will, Exempt Contract Employment
- Contract remuneration $25,000,00 to $32,000,00 per annum depending on qualifications and experience.
- This position requires that you have a 2011-2012 CNMI Business License
- U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident-Hire Only
- Please submit cover letter and resume by the deadline of **January 16, 2012 at 5:00PM** to the CCA email at cca@ccamarianas.org, or hand deliver it to the CCA office located in Gualo Rai. Address your cover letter to Bud White, President of CCA, or to Maggie Camacho, Chair of the Selection Committee. For more information, please call our office at 682-0050

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXII, Issue No. 6

Published daily at 2/F JP Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The Taliban's olive branch

American officials are welcoming a Taliban statement that the Afghan insurgents will set up an office in the Persian Gulf state of Qatar. The move is being seen as a first step toward peace talks aimed at reconciling the Taliban and the Western-backed government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, something the United States has long sought to broker. A serious offer to negotiate would mark not only a departure from the group's previous refusal to engage in talks but also ease concerns over the scheduled withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from the country by 2014.

The United States and its Afghan allies must proceed cautiously, however, given that previous peace overtures to the insurgents have come up empty. The most egregious failure occurred in September, when a purported envoy of Taliban leader Mullah Omar assassinated Burhanuddin Rabbani, the chairman of the Afghan government's High Peace Council, by detonating a bomb hidden in his turban during a meeting set up to outline a framework for talks.

That attack followed U.S. and Afghan attempts last year to open a dialogue with insurgents that would have been almost comical in their ineptitude had not the stakes been so high. The supposed back-channel peace feeler was made through a man who claimed to have Mullah Omar's ear. But ultimately it turned out he was merely a clever impostor who not only left his interlocutors high and dry but absconded with hundreds of thousands of dollars in NATO money he had been paid to act as a go-between.

U.S. officials say they expect the Taliban's willingness to talk will be conditioned on the release of hundreds of militants held by Afghan and NATO forces, though the group has not yet released a formal list of demands. The U.S. and its allies will have to balance the risks involved in freeing potentially dangerous captives who could turn up on the battlefield against the benefits of securing a Taliban pledge to renounce violence, break with al-Qaida, enter into the democratic process and accept the new Afghan constitution's protections for the rights of women and religious and ethnic minorities.

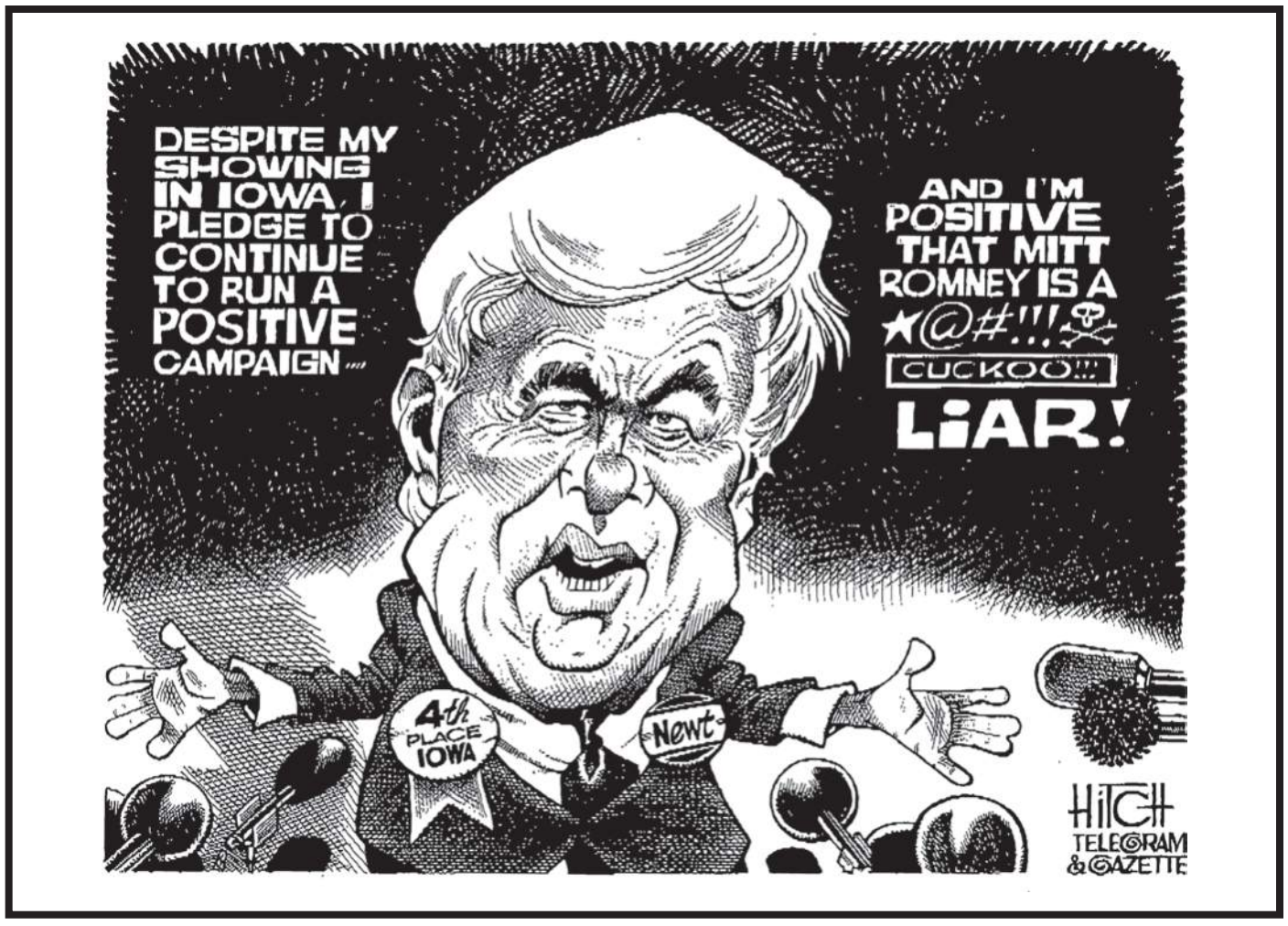
Whether the Taliban would ever accept such terms is a matter of fierce debate. Some Afghan politicians insist that, despite Monday's announcement, the Taliban are still less interested in reconciling with the Karzai government than in toppling it. Moreover, they say, the insurgency is riven by so many competing factions that even if an agreement could be reached with one of them, the others would likely continue fighting.

For his part, Karzai has been cool to the idea of using Qatar as a channel for negotiations. Initially, he reportedly favored Saudi Arabia or Turkey as a venue, only to grudgingly approve Qatar as a site last week. In any case, it may be months—or years—before the talks produce results, even as the clock ticks down for the eventual withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces.

We're hopeful something good may yet come out of the proposed contacts, however inauspicious the outlook now appears. U.S. officials suggest the pounding insurgent leaders have taken from U.S. Special Forces and air attacks in recent years may have paid off by encouraging their arrival at the negotiating table.

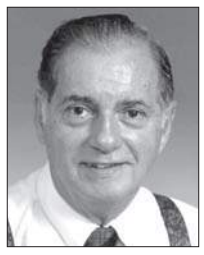
But mindful of the repeated failures of the past, the United States and its allies can't afford to let up on efforts to continue weakening the enemy through drone strikes and night raids against suspected militants. It may be true that ending the fighting ultimately must come through a diplomatic and political agreement rather than through military victory. But the U.S. needs to remain on guard in case the latest Taliban proposal turns out to be a ploy to secure the release of its captured fighters and buy time to await the departure of all foreign troops. In that case, no amount of diplomacy is likely to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

(c)2012 The Baltimore Sun


DESPITE MY SHOWING IN IOWA, I PLEDGE TO CONTINUE TO RUN A POSITIVE CAMPAIGN...
AND I'M POSITIVE THAT MITT ROMNEY IS A ★@#!!!
CUCKOO!!!
LIAR!
4th PLACE IOWA
Newt
HITCH
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

FOUR KEYS TO OUR FUTURE GROWTH

Agriculture, aquaculture, mariculture, and animal husbandry



By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

For the past several years we have been searching for a panacea that will cure our economic illnesses. We have tried garment factories but failed. Daily we plea with investors to come help us by investing in various activities. Today we are flirting with casino gambling in Saipan. We are frantically searching for anything or anybody to come and save us. We just don't want to accept the fact that help can only come from help within ourselves.

The Northern Marianas Islands in its short history since becoming a United States commonwealth in 1986 has tried several activities to become a prosperous group of islands. The only one that is still sustaining us is tourism. And that also is flagging. Today we enjoy about 300,000 plus or minus tourists per year. So what should we do?

We continue failing to see the acres of diamonds right in our back yards in four areas—agriculture, aquaculture, mariculture, and animal husbandry. Let's talk about each one.

Agriculture has changed dramatically, especially since the end of World War II. Food and fiber productivity has soared due to new technologies, mechanization, improved seed genetics, population growth, and government policies. Years ago the same plot of land produced say only 100 lbs of vegetables can now produce about 45 percent more in the same size plot due to improved techniques.

In the United States 1 percent of the labor force is in farming. And 1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product is from agriculture.

Aquaculture is the cultivation of various shellfish and various fin fish in ponds or tanks. For example, one of the largest activities in aquaculture is the growing of shrimp. This activity of cultivating shellfish and other fish has become an industry involving billions of dollars and a major export-import industry world wide.

Mariculture or marine aquaculture is the cultivation of marine organisms in their natural environment. Mariculture of fish, shellfish, seaweed, sea cumbers, and other marine products is seeing explosive growth around the world. Farming the sea holds the promise of producing the food and the livelihoods that a growing population requires.

Animal husbandry is the cultivation of various animals for meat. This includes cows, pigs, goats, sheep, deer, chicken, and ducks. By careful breeding and raising of these animals, we can enjoy a major source of our protein food.

These four areas of food development have helped and are helping many third rate nation countries to prosper. These activities are supplying work, food and money to what would otherwise be a hopeless and poverty ridden community. They are an invaluable asset to us.

So what does the CNMI's tiny islands with a total land area of 179 square miles for all the islands, and a population of 53, 883 (2010 census) with 90 percent of the population residing in Saipan have to do with agriculture, aquaculture, mariculture, and animal hubandry? Do we have the ingredients for becoming a fairly major player in these three areas?

We are blessed with three major islands—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—that enjoy bountiful fertile land, little pollution, blue clean oceans swamped with fish, and tropical temperature year round. I have test marketed the food we grow in these islands and found it to be as good and acceptable as the food grown anywhere else. Our fruits can compete with the fruit from any other country. The fish caught in our oceans will bring good market prices. Animals raised in these islands are healthy and grow strong quickly.

Because I have always believed this to be true is the main reason a group of us has formed Arctic Circle Air to motivate farmers to produce and export their fruits and vegetable. Already we have found buyers eager to purchase the fruits and vegetable grown in our islands. All we have to do now is to grow them.

About a week ago, I entertained a visitor from China. He was a former director of the Yellow Sea fisheries Research Institute and Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences. He has studied and worked with fisheries and agriculture for over fifty years. In addition he has written a number of scholarly books and articles on the subjects.

As I toured him around Saipan and on our waters in the lagoon, he remarked to me a most interesting statement:

"I have traveled to over fifty countries but I have not found such clear and bountiful ocean and blue sky. Your land is so fertile and can grow many good crops and fruits. Why aren't the people here doing more of these activities?"

This statement convinced me more that ever that if we begin to cultivate our natural resources, we will regain a prosperous economy and put many of our people to work producing food for our tables and for export.

See AGRICULTURE on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Bully in the play yard

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's *Opinion Section*

I was barely nine growing up in the river sandbar town of Aparri at the mouth of the Cagayan River in the northern part of the Philippines when a buddy suddenly turned into a bully. George was the son of a Filipina and a GI's romantic fling on the tail end of World War II, and his Caucasian genes gave him a larger than the norm appearance in our play yard. He did not take advantage of his imposing stature but he got the brunt of our sniggering by pointing out that he never knew his father each time he earned our displeasure. Lose face is not a desired state anywhere in Asia.

On this particular afternoon in our hide-the-twirled-rubber-bands-on-the end-a-bamboo-stick under the sand game, he started to pick on me, needling the short runt of the litter. A mental trigger got pulled and I sprung up grabbing one of George's arms, turned my body so I was hauling him up my back like a bundle of unthreshed palay (rice), and flung him down to the ground in a way that would have amazed a judo-er. I did not think the body throw would cause any damage, the ground being sandy and soft. For a month, however, George wore a sling on shattered bones and dislocated joints, and I skipped the playground the rest of the year.

Bullying, the inflicting of fear and pain through imposing physical threat, is one CNMI-PSS has been adumbrating against as a looming presence in the schoolyard. At SVES, one of my "mongrel" students who was bigger than the local genetic strain but was more gently predisposed, went home on many occasions in tears for being bullied by shorter but menacing local boys. Not the Korean girls who quickly bonded together in common defense from the taunting of their local counterparts. Koreans were perceived as carpetbaggers because most village Mom and Pop stores were Hanggok-run but it dawned on the Hanggul saram children early on that there was strength in unified defense.

One of the local teachers, out of seeming deep defensiveness, not only made it her business to immediately go to the principal's office to "tell" on other teachers each time she perceived an infraction of rules, until the office told her to stop, but in her class, one can slice fear in the air. She called it "discipline," a carrot-and-stick variety that an psychologist called "coercive bullying."

Shortly after joining PSS, I was party to parents of autistic children at STaRPO and SpEd PSS to jointly develop SpEd curriculum and training, particularly those diagnosed with ASD, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. The former CK Headstart facility was no longer in use, was in disrepair, and a joint effort went into refurbishing the facility. The SpEd head who was an MOU principal, however, discovered a debilitating disease that caused her to seek immediate medical assistance in the mainland.

My spouse and I, both considered "aliens" on island (though I carried a blue passport), decided that for three months, instead of paying rent, we would use the money to buy needed materials and equipment for the center, and stay in the facility that had a history of being vandalized by community hoodlums, twice while undergoing repairs. We upgraded the kitchen, bathrooms, and water tank.

STaRPO center quickly became a community node. Events of PACA/STaRPO-UCCDD/NMC and the disability community lost no time in holding activities at the location; so did SpEd and PSS-related events. An NMPASI-assisted mother came in regularly to clean up the place, and Saturday voluntary workdays and landscaping on the premises were held.

A ranking PSS Central Office personnel attended one of the events. We explained our residency and how we intended to continue the repairs through continuing occupancy. By then, PSS' material support understandably dried up after the SpEd officer who proposed the original PSS-STaRPO MOA went on medical leave. The smiley image of "keep up the good work" we thought we were getting was shattered the following early Sunday morning when a police officer came knocking at the door.

"Something wrong, officer?"

"We got a phone call reporting unauthorized residency on the public facility."

One of our neighbors recently expressed delight in our presence as it mitigated further vandalism, but her aunt was our former landlord elsewhere, and she was not pleased. So we understood, and immediately explained our residency and that PSS Central posed no objections, name-dropping our ranking PSS contact.

"E-hem," the officer continued, "that's who called to make the report."

Needless to say, my fear-stricken spouse took us out of the facility in a jiffy. We continued to be steward to the facility but evening break-ins and vandalism commenced, some making the local paper. After the ninth time when books and files were scattered, computers were carted away, and walls defaced, we decided to call it 'quits'.

Bullying? We commonly reserve that term for the physical variety, but the behavior ensues from the same dynamic attendant to domestic violence, abuse of authority, sexual intimidations, vandalism—the foisting and imposition of fear on others, and the coercive defensiveness of both the perpetrators, and ironically, the bullied themselves.

The "bully pulpit" has become a term for "coercive persuasion." As a former man-of-the-cloth, we may reconsider making the term acceptable. I should know. There is nothing persuasive about bullies!

Lachuk flores gi hatdin

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John S. DelRosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's *Opinion Section*

Estaba gi hatdin korasonhu man-gatbon flores siha. Kada ohas man-i'ina ma'lag kulan isa gi lañget ni inadotna ni difirientes kulot siha. Hana' ma'agim-yu' sa' guiya este siha na flores i ñetu yan ñeta ni para u kinatga mona hafa esta hu tutuhon.

Kada unu difirensiau mataga'ña 'sino sensiaña. Guaha pasensia, malamaña, finu, bastus, areglau, disareglau, menhalom, hasupag, humidde, banidosu, mefnu', fatkilu, kalagtos, malagtos yan otru siha maña. Hu lie' hayeyu' umosge lau machalapon gi entre siha.

Guaha un' lahihu sen finu deste trahiña esta halom gi usun bañu. Ni habun ni ha nasesetbe ti siña mapacha. 'An humanau para eskuela, ha chuchule un' pat meyas para tulaika 'an masahalom adeñgña. Kontodu brochas nifen ha pega gi katpetaña.

Un' ñeta sumen areglau. Deste ke man-mata ha dobla sabanasña ya ha aregla katreña. Sumen atlibes yan i cheluña ni no siakassu. Todu magaguña man-madobla ya man-mapega tunas gi halom kauhau.

Un' ñetun diñga' ande, mefnu', ga' nana, bihu, kantot, yan yo'ase'. I otru ti mefnu, kalagtos, hihot as bihuña yan tataña, ya todu i tiempu guiya mofo'na man-ñgiñge giya hame. Este i segundu ñetun diñga' i silensiu yan gai fuetsa mas ke otdinariu.

Marepara na yangin ha tifi' i flores ya ha pega gi hilu' lamasa, tinatitiye este ni dinimalas hihot na parientes. Hihotyu' yan este na ñetu pot sessu guiyayu' rumikononose ya 'an mamaisen pot guahu, siempre mamaisen para u fan besita. 'An mattu, hu ulus hai'ña ya sige pagu ha togtugyu'. Kumu chumachaleg pues libianu muna'luyu' tatte ginen sinagu pat hafa na chinatsaga.

Hana' ma'agim korasonhu i mañasaunau diariu gi nobenan familia antes de oran deskanso. Guaha 'nai man-sisikat lau mana' fonhayan i nobena dispues 'nai matutuhon estudiun niha. Esta establisau ineyag yan adelanton linala' espirituat ya siempr u mas fitme este pagu na sakan 'an matutuhon man-dottrina.

Todu pot todu, siempre este siha na flores ni man-lachuk' gi hatdin korasonhu u fan dañkulu yan echu tautau. U fan motmut respetu, yinea'se' gi peble yan na'mase'. Estague' ginefsagaghu i mauleg tinituhon niha.

■ ■ ■ ■

Maliñgun Tradision

Fandañgu, un' tradision natibu ni buente esta maliñgu. Inafuetsas papa' gi fondun tasi ni kantidan gastu estake u fattu i haanen umakamu' 'sino fandañgu.

In' hassu antes i mutmorasion este na selebrasion? Gaige i para mahatsan palapala, muñgayu para i feggun yan hotnun sanhiyuñg, peska, mapunu' ga'ga', preparasion a'ug (chinili' trastis siha para i nobia ni familian i nobiu), pueñgen komplimientu 'nai magutus i uttimu finihu' yan otru siha preparasion.

Magahet na dañkulu na gastun neñkanu' para todu atmos banda para i man-mattu manman-ayuda diariu fuera de ha'anen fandañgu. Dispues, guaha 'nai man-daña i lalahe man-gimen maneska. Tinatiye este ni mayulañg palapala yan foggun sanhiyoñg ni mahatsa para preparasion sentadan fandañgu. Lau estague' mina' fandadañgu este na dinaña.

Mas ha' na tiempu manegosiu yan hotel gupot umakamu'. Mas menos gastu, buruka ya magpu' todu gi oran 'las dies. Debi un' tulus hau para gima' guine na ora. Taya' kampu para otru gastu fuera ke hafa maplaneha ni dos familia.

Mañge na tradision lau i gastu fumuñot ma-adelanta mas sa' guaguan para i familia. Lau gagaige ha' preparasion bautismu, primet kumuñion yan makonfitma na masilelebra ni megai na familia. Guaha lokue' 'nai mana' guaha kadu' na kompleaños pot para u fan gimen i lalahe. Dios mihu!

■ ■ ■ ■

Mudai un' Chamorun Guam gi taxi guine. 'Nai sige papa' gi hegsu' Tatlaje, ha faisen i draiba haye-gue' na familia. Ineppe, "Familian ga'ga'!" Mahñgañg ya mamatkilu i prohimu.

Dispues ilegña talu, "Ai agun amigu, haye hau na familia pot para bai' ketuñgu' kau parientes hit na dos?" Sinablasus talu tatte, "Familian ga'ga'. Nanahu si Marian paluma, tatahu si Kindu' manog". Maulegña ha' buente ti mamaisen. Umaya yan pitbetson i draiba.

AGRICULTURE

From Page 10

Why are we importing frozen chicken, beef and pork when we can easily grow our own and enjoy them fresh, not frozen? Why do we insist on importing much of our fresh fruits and vegetables when we can so abundantly grow them here? Think of all the money that would be paid to our local farmers and stay in our islands to circulate helping us better.

By localizing our growth of the various food items, our community will take on a new meaning. Every Saturday at the Sabalu Farmers Market, I notice that so many of the customers find time to chat with the farmer from whom they are buying their products. I also notice how more friendly people are as they roam from stall to stall. There seems to be a feeling of localization and congeniality.

By creating an environment for sustainable agriculture in all of the above mentioned areas, three main goals will be achieved: environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. These goals can be met if we create the will and determination to become the food basket for ourselves as well as for our neighbors.

I have frequently mentioned about the almost infinite possibilities for growing fruits, vegetable, fish and animals in our beautiful islands. But we seem to have lost this desire for farming and fishing some time ago. Years ago most of us grew accustomed to working for the government and as a result spent less time farming and fishing. This habit has continued down to today. As a result we are living on a false economy as virtually nothing is being produced or manufactured today. We insist on importing most of our daily necessities. Do we wonder why we are in an economic depression?

No, I am not sermonizing about the good old days. I am merely asking us to consider what we have under our feet and how it can help us regain a better economic status. The simple economic fact is that we are importing more than we can afford and are employing more people than we need in our government.

Perhaps what I am suggesting above will not return us fully to the economic strength we desire, but we will eat better and will enjoy our lives better. Our land will be better utilized and our pride will be stronger. It will be a start towards a better life.

Let me relate a cute story about a farmer busy in his fields when a preacher passed by. The preacher was impressed with the beauty of the farm and with all the crops growing there. So he stopped and said to the farmer: "God has been good to you to bless you with such a wonderful farm."

The farmer stopped his work, wiped his perspiring brow and remarked: "I beg your pardon, preacher, but you should have seen what it looked like when God gave this farm to me." With that he turned and went back to work.

Remember to keep SMILING! It is the best way to show someone that we care. Have a great week! And keep SMILING! Better days are ahead!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

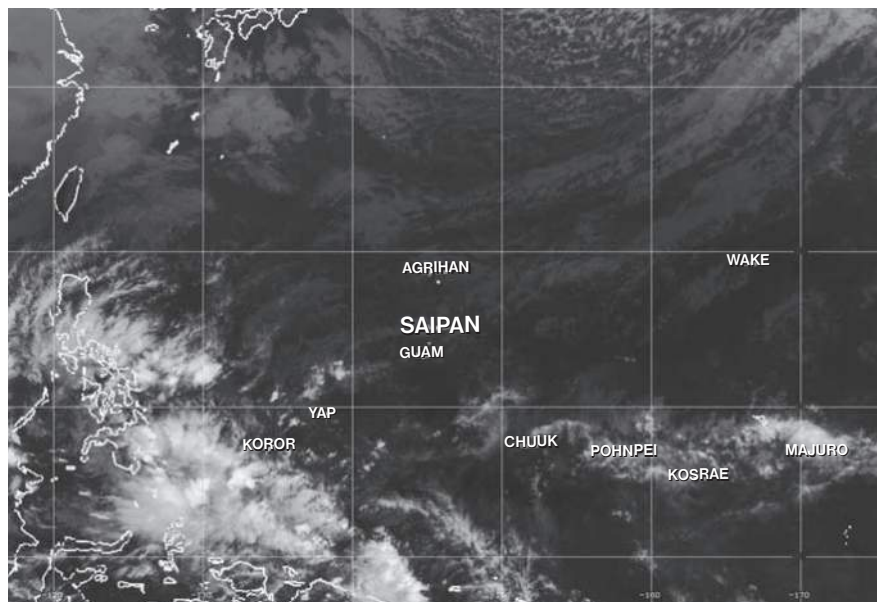
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲83	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲87	▼79
Chuuk	Showers	▲85	▼80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84	▼79
Kosrae	Showers	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲71	▼67
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲37	▼16
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲70	▼64
Honolulu	Sunny	▲80	▼70
London	Cloudy	▲53	▼38
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲74	▼45
Manila	Thundershowers	▲83	▼75
Melbourne	Showers	▲72	▼58
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲78	▼62
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲42	▼32
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲50	▼39
Paris	Cloudy	▲51	▼44
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲44	▼31
Rome	Sunny	▲58	▼38
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼36
San Francisco	Sunny	▲63	▼44
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲35	▼21
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲48	▼36
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼34

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends westward from 25N180 to north of Wake Island at 25N170E then continues southwestward to just south of Guam near 13N145E and finally to beyond 130E at 11N east of 160E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are occurring north of the boundary to beyond 25N west of 160E. Patchy clouds and showers are present along and up to 250 miles northwest of the shear line. A surface trough reaches southeastward from Mindanao to a low-level circulation centered southwest of Koror at EQ130E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found just south of Koror south of a line from 10N130E to EQ143E. Low-level convergence near two weak surface troughs is creating scattered showers within 120 miles of line from 7N153E to 7N177E. This includes Pohnpei, Kosrae, Kwajalein and Majuro as well as other atolls in the southern Marshall Islands.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:42 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
8:43 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
2:04 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
6:57 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Tuesday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Wednesday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Thursday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:02 PM	6:21 AM
Tuesday	6:58 PM	7:10 AM
Wednesday	7:53 PM	7:56 AM
Thursday	8:49 PM	8:40 AM
Friday	9:44 PM	9:24 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
C05070	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:00am	8:35am	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05076/179	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

In elections, jobless trend matters more than rate

WASHINGTON (AP)—Unemployment is higher than it's been going into any election year since World War II.

But history shows that won't necessarily stop President Barack Obama from reclaiming the White House.

In a presidential election year, the unemployment trend can be more important to an incumbent's chances than the unemployment rate.

Going back to 1956 no incumbent president has lost when unemployment fell over the two years leading up to the election. And none has won when it rose.

The picture is similar in the 12 months before presidential elections: Only one of nine incumbent presidents (Gerald Ford in 1976) lost when unemployment fell over that year, and only one (Dwight Eisenhower in 1956) was re-elected when it rose.

Those precedents bode well for Obama. Unemployment was 9.8 percent in November 2010, two years before voters decide whether Obama gets to stay in the White House. It was down to 8.7 percent in November 2011, a year before the vote. It fell to 8.5 percent in December and is expected to fall further by Election Day.

Even so, the unemployment rate is still at recession levels. And former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, who is contending with other Republican candidates to challenge Obama in November, has made the weak economy the centerpiece of his campaign.

In a statement Friday, Romney said Obama's policies "have slowed the recovery and created misery for 24 million Americans who are unemployed, or stuck in part-time jobs when what they really want is full-time work."

An Associated Press-GfK poll of American adults last month found that 60 percent of American adults disapprove of Obama's performance on economic issues.

Obama can take comfort in President Ronald Reagan's experience. In November 1982, the economy was in the last month of a deep recession, and unemployment was 10.8 percent, the highest since the Great Depression. A year later, unemployment was down to 8.5 percent. By November 1984, it was still a relatively high 7.2 percent, but the downward trend was unmistakable. Reagan was re-elected that month in a 59-41 percent landslide.

"A sense that things are on the mend is really important to people," says Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center. Three examples:

■ President Richard Nixon got a boost from falling unemployment, which dropped from 5.9 percent in November 1970 to 5.3 percent when voters went to the polls in November 1972.

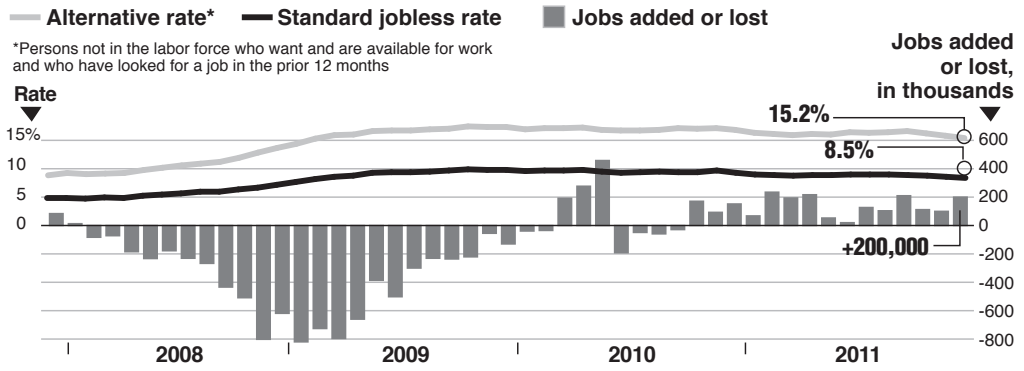
■ President Jimmy Carter was hurt by rising unemployment—from 5.9 percent in November 1978 to 7.5 percent in November 1980.

■ President George H.W. Bush, who seemed invincible after the U.S. drove Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in early 1991, wound up losing in November 1992. The unemployment rate was 7.4 percent that month, up from 6.2 percent two years earlier.

The trend holds up even when the changes in unemployment are slight. President Bill Clinton was re-elected handily even though the unemployment rate was only 0.2 percentage points lower in November 1996 than it had been two years earlier and was the same as it had been a year before.

A brightening picture

The U.S. jobless rate fell in December to its lowest level since early 2009 as the economy added 200,000 net new jobs. The trend in U.S. employment since the recession's start in December 2007:



Good news: More jobs created in 2011
Annual net new jobs

2011	+1.6 million
2010	+940,000

Bad news: Still a long way to go

Net decline in jobs since December 2007	–6.1 million
Number of jobless, December 2011	13 million

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Graphic: Pat Carr
© 2012 MCT

Italy's PM: No nation can fight debt crisis alone

ROME (AP)—No European nation is strong enough to ride out the continent's debt crisis alone, Italy's new premier insisted Saturday, urging fellow EU members to develop a common growth policy.

Premier Mario Monti, leader of the eurozone's third-largest economy, is an economist who was appointed in November with a mandate to pull Italy back from the brink of financial disaster.

"Italy, in order to develop economically and socially, needs Europe, and Europe to be stronger needs Italy," Monti said in a speech in the northern city of Reggio Emilia at a ceremony honoring the Italian flag.

"No European country is so strong that it can go forward alone in facing the great global economies," he added. "Europe needs to put into action common and coordinated growth policies on financial stability."

With Italy making what he called a "decisive contribution" to euro-zone stability, "now it's the time for everyone to do their homework. No one can think they can do less than the others. Europe will overcome the crisis only with the determined and united action of all members," said Monti, a former EU commissioner.

Monti didn't single out any country, but some critics have felt that Germany has been putting its own economic policy ahead of EU-wide interests. Monti will meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on Wednesday and at a major European summit in Brussels at the end of the month.

EU leaders at that summit will be wrestling with a worsening economic outlook, as more European nations tip over into recession, skepticism keeps rising over many EU countries' bonds and the survival of the euro remains in doubt.

"The eurozone must continue to represent an anchor and a secure reference point in all its geographic extensions," Monti said.

Monti has successfully prodded Italy's often slow-moving parliament into approving quick spending cuts, new and higher taxes and reforms to the long-generous pension system that will see Italians working longer and retiring later.

He singled out two factors in Italy's favor: the fact that many of its families and business "are among the least indebted among industrialized nations." But the premier tried to rally Italians to combat two chronically stubborn problems: corruption and widespread tax evasion by companies and citizens alike.

For some consumers, surveys breed feedback fatigue

NEW YORK (AP)—We appreciate your decision to read this story. Would you take a short survey about your satisfaction with the reading experience? Could you review this article on a website? Rate it for other readers?

As inboxes fill with requests to appraise holiday purchases and trips, it's prime time for feedback fatigue.

With emailed appeals for comments on commonplace transactions and customer-service calls that beget requests to take a survey, consumers are being pinged for opinions at a rate that has gotten some publicly grousing about a surfeit of surveys.

One such lament spawned dozens of responses on a frequent fliers forum last year. Some Gmail users complained about recurring bids to react to a change in the email service's look this fall, prompting owner Google to curtail the requests. Comedian Bill Maher dinged the feedback frenzy in a video for The Huffington Post in 2010, telling a nameless company, "I was actually pretty happy with your customer service, up to the point where you asked me to take a survey about your customer service."

Surely, it's nice to be courted for input, at least sometimes. But some consumers say they're fed up with giving time-consuming feedback for free, don't like being drawn into a data web used to evaluate employees or feel companies don't act on the advice they get. Others say they simply don't have anything revelatory to impart about, say, ordering a shirt or buying a package of pens.

"I resent the assumption that I'm interested in helping this company beyond making a purchase. Giving them your money is enough," says Travis Van, 34. He blogged about the issue in June on the website of ITDatabase, a San Francisco-based service he founded for technology companies seeking media contacts.

Japan plans to scrap nuclear plants after 40 years

AP

This Nov. 12, 2011 photo shows a view of the crippled Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Okuma town, Japan.

TOKYO (AP)—Japan says it will soon require atomic reactors to be shut down after 40 years of use to improve safety following the nuclear crisis set off by last year's tsunami.

Concern about aging reactors has been growing because the three units at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant in northeastern Japan that went into meltdown following the tsunami in March were built starting in 1967. Among other reactors at least 40 years old are those at the Tsuruga and Mihama plants in central Japan, which were built starting in 1970.

Many more of the 54 reactors in Japan will reach the 40-year mark in the near future, though some were built only a few years ago.

The government said Friday that it plans to introduce legislation in the coming months to require reactors to stop running after 40 years. Japanese media reported that the law may include loopholes to allow some old nuclear reactors to keep running if their safety is confirmed with tests.

The proposal could be similar to the law in the U.S., which grants 40-year licenses and allows for 20-year extensions. Such renewals have been granted to 66 of 104 U.S. nuclear reactors. That process has been so routine that many in the industry are already planning for additional license extensions that could push the plants to operate for 80 years or even 100.

Japan does not currently have a limit on years of operation. It had planned to expand nuclear power before the meltdown, but has since ordered reactors undergoing routine inspections to undergo new tests and get community approval before they can be restarted. The new restrictions mean that only six Japanese reactors are currently running.

The Asahi newspaper reported Saturday Japan is likely to face a power shortage if it carries out the 40-year rule, which barring loopholes would force 18 more reactors to shut down by 2020, and another 18 by 2030.

The government has already decided to scrap six reactors at Fukushima Dai-ichi, where backup generators, some of them in basements, were destroyed by the March 11 tsunami—setting off the world's worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl. The government has said it will take 40 years to fully decommission the plant.

Nation

Giffords will soon face decision about future

WASHINGTON (AP)—The signals are strong. One year after being shot in the head, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is on a mission to return to the job she so clearly loved.

Her husband and people near the three-term congresswoman say she is highly motivated to recover from her injuries and get back to work in Washington, potentially using her inspirational story as a way to mend political differences in the nation's capital. She faces a May deadline to get on the November ballot, meaning she has a few months to decide her next step.

Her future will depend on a recovery that has progressed in remarkable fashion over the past year as she is now able to walk and talk. Her only interview occurred with ABC's Diane Sawyer nearly 10 months after the shooting and showed how far she has come, but also how far she has to go. At the time, she did not speak in complete sentences and repeated her words to make her point.

AP

In this undated photo provided by ABC, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and husband Mark Kelly are interviewed by Diane Sawyer on ABC's 20/20.

"No, better. Um, better, better," she said when asked about returning to Washington.

The day after the interview ran, her congressional office released an audio recording that showed she had made progress in her communication skills in the two weeks that had elapsed between the interview and its airing. She read from a script and an aide said it took multiple tries before she was comfortable with the result.

"I'm getting stronger. I'm getting better," Giffords said. "There is a lot to say. I will speak better."

Jared Lee Loughner, 23, who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, has pleaded not guilty to charges stemming from the mass shooting Jan. 8, 2011 outside a Tucson supermarket where Giffords was meeting with her constituents. He is being forcibly medicated at a federal prison facility in Missouri in an effort to make him mentally ready for trial.

Giffords returned to Tucson on Friday from Houston to attend ceremonies to mark Sunday's one-year anniversary of the shooting that killed six and injured her and 12 others.

Her first stop was her office, where she participated in an emotional ceremony to honor slain staffer Gabe Zimmerman. Her staff dedicated a life-size photo of Zimmerman and a memorial plaque that will greet visitors as they arrive. Her husband, Mark Kelly, posted a photo of the couple on a visit Saturday morning to a trailhead outside Tucson named in honor of Zimmerman.

Events will take place throughout Sunday in Tucson, and Giffords is expected to attend at least one.

Giffords has cast one vote since the shooting. She surprised colleagues in August by returning to Washington to vote for legislation raising the nation's debt ceiling. The debate leading up to the vote had been among the most bitter and partisan of the year. On other votes, she is recorded as not voting.

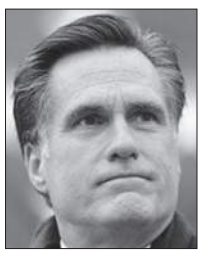
Giffords' staff consults with her when working on major initiatives, such as trying to fend off the Air Force's efforts to move the 612th Air and Space Operations Center out of Tucson. The staff also works on individual constituent requests, such as helping war veterans and their widows obtain benefits or in securing a Tucson woman's flight out of Egypt during demonstrations in early 2011. Aides say that Giffords now participates in teleconferences with members of her staff about once a week, though the call gets put off occasionally based on her schedule.

Romney brushes off rivals' barbs in NH debate.

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—Mitt Romney brushed aside rivals' criticism Saturday night in the opening round of a weekend debate doubleheader that left his Republican presidential campaign challengers squabbling among themselves and unable to knock the front-runner off stride.

Three days before the first in-the-nation New Hampshire primary, Romney largely ignored his fellow Republicans and turned instead on President Barack Obama. "His policies have made the recession deeper and his policies have made the recovery more tepid," he said, despite a declining unemployment rate and the creation of 200,000 jobs last month.

Over the course of the lively 90-minute debate, there were attacks aplenty as Romney's five rivals vied to emerge as his principal rival in the primaries ahead. The former Massachusetts governor won an eight-vote victory in the Iowa caucuses last Tuesday and is far ahead in the pre-primary polls in New Hampshire.



Romney

That leaves his pursuers little time to stop his rise, and, all but conceding New Hampshire to the former governor of next-door Massachusetts, they're mostly focusing their efforts on the South Carolina primary on Jan. 21

Texas Rep. Ron Paul assailed Rick Santorum as a "big government person," an allegation the former Pennsylvania senator disputed. Santorum finished a close second to Romney in Iowa this week, with Paul coming in third.

Paul, who has called former House Speaker Newt Gingrich a "chicken hawk" who has not served in the military, drew withering criticism in return. "I personally resent the kinds of comments and aspersions he routinely makes," Gingrich said.

Paul got the last word, saying emphatically, "When I was drafted I was married and had two kids, and I went." He was an Air Force surgeon in the Vietnam War era.

Gingrich was fourth in Iowa, Perry fifth and Minnesota rep. Michele Bachmann, who has since quit the race, was last. Huntsman did not compete there, hoping to make a splash in New Hampshire.

Romney, who often touts his business background, was attacked in the opening moments of the debate.

Santorum went first, dismissing him as a mere manager. "Being a president is not a CEO. You've got to lead and inspire," he said.

Gingrich followed a few moments later, referring to published accounts that described how some workers were laid off after Bain Capital, the firm Romney once led, invested in their companies and sought to turn them around.

He said Romney should be judged on the basis of whether "on balance, were people better off or worse off by this style of management."

Motorists salvage fur, food from critters' demise

CASEYVILLE, Ill. (AP)—In six years of trapping, one thing has become apparent to Cody Champ: His pursuit of animal pelts isn't cheap, costing him $100 a week just for gas. So, it's little wonder the Illinois man welcomed a recent state law that allows him to get a few freebies, even if he needs a shovel and good gloves.

Among the hundreds of Illinois laws that took effect last year, the so-called "roadkill bill" got little attention despite being perhaps the quirkiest of all—allowing anyone with an Illinois furbearer license to salvage pelts or even food from the unfortunate fauna that prove no match for steel-belted radials.

Republican Rep. Norine Hammond pushed the measure straight-faced at the behest of a retired state conservation officer who thought it was a waste to allow animals' pelts to rot along the roadsides. Hammond said it was an opportunity for some people to make a little money, and could benefit the state by letting citizens carry out the task once relegated to state highway crews.

Despite snickering from some lawmakers, the bill sailed through the General Assembly—twice, because lawmakers overrode a veto by Gov. Pat Quinn, who worried that motorists might suffer the same fate as the critters. One poke came from Rep. Lou Lang, a Chicago-area Democrat who asked what to do if a critter wasn't quite dead.

"Am I required to perform mouth-to-mouth on that dead skunk?" Lang demanded.

Joking aside, at least 14 states have laws related to roadkill, including those that let motorists' keep animals they hit, though some pertain only to deer or bears, according to an informal survey for The Associated Press by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Idaho soon may join the list, after a three-year push by one legislator to allow roadside salvage of game animals. The state's fish and game agency, which once objected to the idea, is awaiting legislative review of a rule that would allow it "under some circumstances."

"You shouldn't let that stuff go to waste," said Rep. Richard Harwood, an Idaho Republican who said he took up the cause after a game warden threatened a neighbor with a $350 fine if he messed with a run-over bobcat near his home for a hide that could net $200. "To be able not to grab it was kind of stupid. Why let it go to waste?"

1793 penny fetches $1.38M at Fla. auction

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—A once-cent copper coin from the earliest days of the U.S. Mint in 1793 has sold for a record $1.38 million at a Florida auction.

James Halperin of Texas-based Heritage Auctions told The Associated Press on Saturday that the sale was "the most a United States copper coin has ever sold for at auction." The coin was made at the Mint in Philadelphia in 1793, the first year that the U.S. made its own coins.

Heritage officials said in a news release that the name of the buyer was not revealed but that he was "a major collector." One of the coin's earliest owners was a well-known Baltimore banker, Louis E. Eliasberg, Sr.

"Mr. Eliasberg was nicknamed, `the king of coins' because before his death in 1976 he assembled a collection that consisted of at least one example of every coin ever made at the United States Mint, a feat never duplicated," Halperin said in the news release.

The final bid for the coin last week was one of the largest sales at the Florida United Numismatists coin show and annual convention, which runs through Sunday. Halperin said a five-dollar gold piece from 1829 also was sold.

Halperin said there remain a few hundred 1793 coins in different condition, but that the one auctioned off Wednesday night is rare because it wasn't in circulation.

Officials say it shows no wear on its lettering, its Lady Liberty face or the chain of linking rings on its back.

The news release said the coin is known as a "Chain Cent" because its chain of linking rings was supposed to represent the solidarity of the states. The design was changed to a wreath after some critics claimed it was symbolic of slavery.

Halperin said the auction had more than $64 million in transactions. The show runs through Sunday.

AP

This undated photo provided by Heritage Auctions shows the front and back of one of the first pennies struck at the United States Mint in Philadelphia.

Asia

Afghan claim of US prison abuse strains key talks

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghan investigators accused the American military Saturday of abusing detainees at its main prison in the country, bolstering calls by President Hamid Karzai for the U.S. to turn over control of the facility and complicating talks about America's future role in Afghanistan.

The investigators also called for any detainee held without evidence to be freed, putting the U.S. and Afghan governments on a collision course in an issue that will decide the fate of hundreds of suspected Taliban and al-Qaida operatives captured by American forces and held indefinitely.

Karzai took Washington by surprise Thursday when he ordered that the U.S. military turn over full control of the prison outside Bagram Air Base within one month, a seemingly impossible deadline given U.S. security concerns about the prisoners and the Afghan government's weak administrative capacity. The countries had been working on phasing a transfer of responsibility of the prison, which hold 3,000 detainees, over two years.

The demand was the latest episode of political brinkmanship as negotiations continued for a Strategic Partnership Document with America that will determine the U.S. role in Afghanistan after 2014, when most foreign troops are due to withdraw. Karzai has demanded an end to unpopular night raids by U.S. troops and control over detainees as a condition of the pact and could be seeking leverage by pushing the detainee issue now.

AP

Gul Rahman Qazi , center, head of an Afghan investigative commission speaks during a media conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012.

Karzai spokesman Mohammad Sediq Amerkhil said Saturday that the president's remarks were a direct response to the investigation team's report of abuse and prolonged detentions.

The charges are reminiscent of allegations surrounding the U.S. treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where admitted Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is held.

Detainees interviewed during two visits to the U.S.-run portion of the Parwan detention center outside Bagram Air Base—about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Kabul—complained of freezing cold, humiliating strip searches and being deprived of light, according to Gul Rahman Qazi, who led the investigation ordered by Karzai.

Another investigator, Sayed Noorullah, said the prison and all detainees must be transferred to Afghan control "as soon as possible," adding, "if there is no evidence ... they have the right to be freed."

U.S. Embassy spokesman Gavin Sundwall said Saturday that American officials only recently received the commission's report. He said the U.S. investigates all allegations of prisoner abuse.

"We will certainly take seriously the report and study it," he said. He added that the U.S. is committed to working with the Afghan government on a joint plan to turn over detainees "in a responsible manner." He would not specify what time frame would be considered responsible.

Karzai's recent relationship with the U.S. has been rocky, even though he came to power after the 2001 American-led intervention to drive the Taliban regime from power for sheltering al-Qaida. He has frequently lashed out at Washington, although he needs U.S. military and financial strength to back his weak government as it battles the Taliban.

Last year, he accused the U.S. and its allies of serving only their own purposes in the country, and has told a Pakistani television station he would support Pakistan in any war against the United States. In 2010, he was said to have threatened to join the Taliban if foreign donors pressured him too much.

PH accuses China of maritime intrusions

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines has protested to China over three Chinese vessels that allegedly intruded into its waters last month, in the latest flaring of tensions over disputed South China Sea regions.

The Philippine government expressed its "serious concerns" to the Chinese Embassy after the three vessels, including a Chinese navy ship, were sighted near Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea on Dec. 11 and 12, Foreign Secretary Alberto del Rosario said Sunday.

Regional military commander Lt. Gen. Juancho Sabban said a Philippine navy patrol ship and an air force plane kept watch from a distance until the Chinese vessels left the country's territorial waters.

The three vessels apparently came from the Chinese-occupied Mischief Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands then cruised into Philippine waters on their way back to China as part of a regular shifting of forces, he said.

"We were watching them. They did not drop anchor or unload construction materials and appeared to be just passing through," Sabban told The Associated Press.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Del Rosario said the new Chinese intrusions violated a 2002 accord between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that discourages claimant countries to the South China Sea's disputed Spratly Islands from taking aggressive steps that could ignite tension or confrontations.

China, the Philippines and four other claimants have long been locked in a tense dispute over potentially oil- and gas-rich South China Sea territories, including the Spratlys.

Many fear the region could be Asia's next potential flash point for conflict.

The Philippines, along with Vietnam, separately accused Chinese vessels of repeatedly intruding into Spratlys areas under their control and sabotaging oil explorations in their regular territorial waters in the first six months of last year.

China denied the claims and reiterated its sovereignty over most of the South China Sea.

Amid the disputes, the Philippines turned to the United States, a defense-treaty ally, to strengthen its underfunded military, one of Asia's weakest. The Philippine navy relaunched an old U.S. Coast Guard cutter as its biggest warship last month to guard its waters near the Spratlys.

President Benigno Aquino III and other top Philippine officials plan to travel to the United States this year to seek two more ships and a squadron of F-16 jets, according to del Rosario.

Malaysia's Anwar ready for worst in sodomy verdict

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said Sunday on the eve of a verdict in his sodomy trial that he is prepared to be imprisoned, but hoped that such an outcome would hurt the ruling coalition in the next national elections.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court could sentence Anwar to a maximum of 20 years if it convicts him Monday of sodomizing a young male former aide.

Anwar denies the charges. He says Prime Minister Najib Razak's governing coalition masterminded the trial in an effort to tarnish his image and potentially banish him from politics. Najib denies any conspiracy.

"We pray for the best, that justice will prevail, but we're prepared for the worst," Anwar told The Associated press.

The prosecution's case in the sodomy trial hinges mainly on testimony by Anwar's accuser, Saiful Bukhari Azlan, and semen samples found on his body that investigators said matched Anwar's DNA. Defense lawyers insist Saiful's testimony contained too many inconsistencies and that the DNA evidence was mishandled and tainted.

Anwar, a 64-year-old former deputy prime minister, was convicted in another sodomy case in 2000. He denied claims that he sodomized his family's ex-driver, and Malaysia's highest court freed him in 2004 after quashing his conviction and nine-year sentence.

Anwar said a conviction in the current case could cause the government to face a backlash in the "court of public opinion in elections" widely expected this year.

"Notwithstanding whether I am set free or jailed, the focus should and must be the elections, and the people must decide," he said. "Make sure you come fully prepared and change the government in the next general elections."

Anwar has been touring various Malaysian states over the past week for rallies to address thousands of supporters, many of whom are expected to demonstrate outside the court when the verdict is announced.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Tortured Afghan girl wants in-laws jailed

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A 15-year-old Afghan girl who was tortured for months after her arranged marriage has spoken out for the first time since her rescue, saying she hopes her husband and his family are jailed for her abuse. Sahar Gul became the bruised and bloodied face of women's rights in Afghanistan after she was rescued in late December when an uncle called police. Speaking in an interview Saturday from a hospital in Kabul, Gul blamed her husband, his parents and his sister for her ordeal. "I want them to be in jail," she said. "They gave me electric shock. ... They beat me with cables and tortured me."

Former Pakistani President Musharraf faces arrest

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf will be arrested in connection with the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto if he returns to the country, a government prosecutor said Saturday. There is no need for any "fresh arrest warrants" for him as a court has already issued orders for his arrest, prosecutor Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali told reporters. Hours earlier, Musharraf told a Pakistani news channel that he would come back later this month to contest the next parliamentary elections, which could be held later this year.

Grounded cargo ship breaks apart on NZ reef

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A cargo ship grounded off the New Zealand coast since October has split in two, spilling sea containers and debris and sparking fears of a fresh oil spill, maritime officials said Sunday. The wreck of the Greek-owned Rena was described as New Zealand's worst maritime environmental disaster even before the rear section of the ship, lashed by pounding seas, broke away overnight. The ship previously spilled heavy fuel oil that fouled pristine North Island beaches and killed up to 20,000 seabirds, and despite salvage efforts nearly 400 tons of oil remain onboard.

World

Haiti 2 years later: Half a million still in camps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Days after the earthquake killed his little girl and destroyed much of his house, Meristin Florival moved his family into a makeshift tent on a hill in the Haitian capital and called it home. Two years later they're still there, living without drains, running water or electricity.

A few kilometers (miles) away, Jean Rony Alexis has left the camp where he spent the months after the quake and moved into a shed-like shelter built on a concrete slab by the Red Cross. But he's not much better off. The annual rent charged by a landlord who lives in a nearby camp jumped from $312 to $375, and he too has no running water.

"This is misery," said Florival, whose 4-month-old daughter was crushed to death in the quake-stricken family home. "I don't see any benefits," said Alexis, whose shed is flooded with noise at night from a saloon next door that's appropriately named the "Frustration Bar."

The two men are among hundreds of thousands of Haitians whose lives have barely improved since those first days of devastation, when the death toll climbed toward 300,000 and the world opened its wallets in response.

While U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, former U.S. President Bill Clinton and others vowed that the world would help Haiti "build back better," and $2.38 billion has been spent, Haitians have hardly seen any building at all.

At the time, grand ambitions were voiced for a Haiti rebuilt on modern lines. New housing would replace shantytowns and job-generating industry would be spread out to ease the human crush of Port-au-Prince, the sprawling capital with its 3 million people.

But now the government seems to be going back to basics, nurturing small, community-based projects designed to bring the homeless back to their old neighborhoods to build, renovate and find jobs through friends.

AP

In this Jan. 4, 2012 photo, Pirist Dugard, 31, places rock on a tarp covering his tent at a camp set up for people displaced by the 2010 earthquake, in what used to be an airstrip in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

The reasons for the slow progress are many. Beyond being among the world's poorest nations and a frequent victim of destructive weather, Haiti's land registry is in chaos - a drag on reconstruction because it's not always clear who owns what land. Then there's a political standoff that went on for more than a year and still hobbles decision-making.

After the quake, a disputed presidential election triggered tire-burning riots that shut down Port-au-Prince for three days. The international airport was forced to close and foreign aid workers had to hunker down in their compounds.

Even after the vote was resolved and Michel Martelly was installed as president in May 2011, there were further snags. The former pop star, new to politics, took six months to install a prime minister, whose job is to oversee reconstruction projects. He infuriated opposition politicians because his administration jailed a deputy without following the law and named a prime minister without consulting them first. They retaliated by trying to thwart him at every turn.

For six months, Martelly was running a government with ministers of the outgoing administration. "It created a situation where it was difficult to take off," the new foreign affairs minister, Laurent Lamothe, told The Associated Press.

Another victim of the impasse was a reconstruction panel co-chaired by Clinton, the U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti. Lawmakers refused to renew its mandate, complaining it contained too few Haitians, though they may have been using it as a pretext to punish Martelly. But it meant that for the next six months there was no agency in place to coordinate home-building.

Meanwhile government employees could be found napping at their desks while awaiting orders from their bosses that never came.

The government and international partners say there has been some progress—600 classrooms for 60,000 children to return to school, more than half of the 10 million cubic meters of rubble cleared, and roads newly paved in the capital and countryside.

New housing is still the most critical objective, yet the biggest official housing effort targets just 5 percent of those in need, and the encampments of cardboard, tarps and bed sheets that went up to cope with 1.5 million homeless people have morphed into shantytowns that increasingly look permanent.

More than 550,000 people are still living in the grim and densely packed camps that are squeezed into the capital's alleyways and pitched on the side of rural roads. And many of those who left the camps, often being evicted or paid to go, say their new conditions are little better, and sometimes much worse.

"I certainly wouldn't call (reconstruction) a success," said Alex Dupuy, who has written books about Haiti and teaches at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. "Other than putting a government in place ... I haven't seen any concrete evidence of recovery under way."

In the first year after the quake, the previous government never set up a housing agency or a clear housing strategy, and meanwhile the camps swelled because foreign aid groups were delivering what the government didn't: water, latrines and electricity. Former President Rene Preval identified five plots of land for new housing but only obtained one, through eminent domain.

Of the 10 best-funded projects approved by a reconstruction panel, not one focuses exclusively on housing. A U.S.-financed $225 million industrial park includes housing for 5,000 workers. But it's on the northern coast of Haiti, 240 kilometers (150 miles) outside the quake zone.

Docs: Argentine leader's thyroid wasn't cancerous

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)—Argentine President Cristina Fernandez didn't have cancer after all.

After having some of Argentina's leading cancer surgeons completely remove her thyroid gland, tests showed no presence of any cancerous cells.

"Tissue studies ruled out the presence of cancerous cells in the thyroid, thus modifying the initial diagnosis," presidential spokesman Alfredo Scoccimarro said Saturday.

Fernandez doesn't even have to swallow the radioactive iodine that patients usually take after thyroid cancer surgery, to make sure any remaining cancer cells are killed, her spokesman said. But she will have to take hormone medicine for the rest of her life.

Fernandez returned Saturday to the presidential residence in suburban Olivos. She underwent the surgery Wednesday, just 25 days after beginning her second term.

The 58-year-old president, through her spokesman, thanked the medical team led by the hospital's surgery chief, Dr. Pedro Saco, an expert in cancers of the head and neck. Later Saturday, she added her own thoughts in a tweet, saying: "Now from Olivos, we thank all the people, citizens, activists and personalities, for the signs of affection and concern."

The announcement that she is cancer-free prompted raucous cheers and chants from several hundred supporters holding vigil for days outside the hospital, carrying signs saying "Be Strong Cristina!"

AP

In this Dec. 10, 2011 file photo, Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez smiles during her swearing-in ceremony in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The idea that she had cancer had worried many Argentines, who re-elected her with a 54 percent landslide in October in part because none of her rivals seemed as capable of maintaining economic growth and social stability.

Since she and her late husband and predecessor as president, Nestor Kirchner, began governing in 2003, Argentina has come back strong from a disastrous world-record debt default and currency devaluation a year earlier. The economy has grown at an average annual rate of 7.6 percent, poverty and unemployment are down and the wealth gap has narrowed. Their administrations have transferred billions of dollars to the poor through social programs.

But their style of rule has been highly personal, concentrating power in a very small circle of loyal advisers. Kirchner's sudden death of a heart attack in 2010 during his wife's first term left many Argentines worried about whether Fernandez could maintain the couple's model of governing, and the cancer diagnosis renewed those fears.

Without her thyroid gland, Fernandez now faces a lifetime of hormone replacement therapy.

This might have been avoided had doctors removed only half of her thyroid, the part surrounding the apparently cancerous nodule, said Dr. Robert Haddad, chief of head and neck oncology at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

"That's the downside. If you remove only half, you don't need the replacement therapy," Haddad said. "It's a pill you take once a day, just like a pill for blood pressure or something, but you have to take it for the rest of your life, which is not insignificant."

Preoperative thyroid cancer diagnoses usually involve inserting a needle and removing a few cells from the suspicious lump. When tests come back positive for cancer, it's best to repeat the test and to get a second opinion before surgery, Haddad said. Still, the only way to be sure a growth is benign or malignant is to remove at least part of the gland.

Some doctors and patients opt for removing the entire gland just to be sure, but Haddad said thyroid cancers tend to be so "well-behaving" that taking the more drastic step usually doesn't make sense.

WORLD BRIEFS

Venezuela, Peru in pacts on oil investments, trade

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—The presidents of Venezuela and Peru have reached an agreement for the Peruvian state oil company to invest in development of Venezuela's eastern Orinoco oil belt. Venezuela's state oil monopoly will study a possible role in developing a petrochemical complex in Peru as well as helping Peru increase its production of heavy and extra heavy crude oil. The formal agreement came during a Saturday meeting between Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Peruvian leader Ollanta Humala.

Suspended Mexican soccer goalie detained in kidnap

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP)—Suspended first-division soccer goalkeeper Omar "El Gato" Ortiz has been arrested for alleged participation in a kidnapping ring, Mexican police announced Saturday. Ortiz, whose nickname means "The Cat," has been under a suspension after testing positive for steroids in April 2010, when he was playing with the Rayados of Monterrey. Jorge Domene, the security spokesman for Nuevo Leon state, where Monterrey is located, said Ortiz worked with a gang responsible for at least 20 kidnappings.

Mexico gets independence monument 1 1/2 years late

MEXICO CITY (AP)—President Felipe Calderon led the lighting of a soaring independence monument Saturday that was supposed to be ready for Mexico's 2010 bicentennial, but came in nearly 1 1/2 years late and way over budget. Some Mexicans have suggested the quartz-clad light tower be dubbed "the monument to corruption." Costs nearly tripled from about 400 million pesos to more than 1 billion (equivalent at current rates to about $75 million), and auditors found 95 improprieties in contracting that resulted in criminal charges against at least four public employees. It was supposed to have been ready on Sept. 15, 2010, for the celebrations of the bicentennial of the start of the country's 1810 independence movement.

Focus

Shades of NKorea's founder in its young new leader

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The resemblance is striking: the full cheeks and quick smile, the confident gait, the habit of gesturing with both hands when he speaks

North Korea's young new leader, Kim Jong Un, appears to be fashioning himself as the reincarnation of Kim Il Sung, his grandfather and the nation's founder, as he seeks to solidify his hold on the nation of 24 million in the wake of his father's death last month.

Unlike Kim Jong Il, who sequestered himself for three years of mourning before formally taking up the mantle of leadership, Kim Jong Un is moving swiftly to demonstrate a decisiveness perhaps aimed at dispelling concerns about his ability to rule. He is only in his late 20s and made his public debut as his father's anointed successor just 15 months ago, far less time than the 20 years Kim Jong Il had to prepare to lead. With the world watching, Kim Jong Un has tread confidently down the "red silk carpet" laid before him by his father, as one analyst put it, using family tradition as his guideposts. Kim Il Sung has served as his main muse as he seeks to consolidate power and loyalty.

"The image of a young smiling Kim Il Sung is deeply engraved in North Korean people's minds. It is the image of a young general who liberated the nation from Japan's imperial rule," said Ahn Chan-il, a political scientist at the World Institute for North Korea Studies in South Korea who was born in North Korea. "Kim Jong Un is borrowing from that. Kim Il Sung is resurrected in the looks and behavior of Kim Jong Un."

Two years ago, the world knew so little about the young man that even the South Korean government was spelling his name wrong. Here's a look at what we know now.

THE BLOODLINE

Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il were characterized in North Korea as having a divine right to rule, and Kim Jong Un is leaning on this legacy as he shores up support for a third generation of Kim leadership.

Kim Il Sung founded the country in 1948, three years after Korea was divided into the Soviet-backed north and the U.S.-allied south. When he died in 1994, Kim Jong Il took over in what was the first hereditary succession in the communist world.

"His power comes from the bloodline," said Kim Gwang-in, head of research at the North Korea Strategy Center in Seoul.

Plans for Kim Jong Un to succeed his father were laid out after Kim Jong Il suffered a stroke in 2008. As recently as October, Kim Jong Il issued an order to elevate his son to supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, the Korean Central News Agency reported late last month.

"Kim Jong Il laid a red silk carpet, and Kim Jong Un only needs to walk on it," said Jeung Young-tae of the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

The most important holidays in North Korea are the birthdays of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, and it's likely that Kim Jong Un's birthday will become a national holiday as well. Exactly when he was born has never been revealed, but it's widely believed that he will celebrate a birthday on Sunday.

In recent days, North Korea's state broadcaster has aired tributes and odes to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, as well as the first documentary footage of Kim Jong Un and a tune composed to prepare for his leadership: "Footsteps."

THE LOOK

Kim Jong Un's resemblance to his grandfather is uncanny—and probably strategic.

He is in his late 20s, undeniably young for the leader of a nation. But Kim Il Sung was just a few years older when he emerged in 1945 to lead the North after Japan's World War II defeat ended its colonial rule of Korea.

"When Kim Jong Un smiles, that reminds me exactly of a 33-year-old Kim Il Sung," Ahn said.

Photos of Kim Il Sung hanging on the walls of the Workers' Party Foundation Museum in Pyongyang, spotted during an October visit by The Associated Press, show a dapper young man with a startling similarity to Kim Jong Un. Even their hairlines are trimmed identically.

The grandson walks, shoulders thrown back, and gestures with both hands like his grandfather.

Last year, Kim Jong Un appeared in a light gray parka like the one his father famously wore. And during the mourning period, Kim Jong Un donned a dark Mao-style suit like the one his father wore when Kim Il Sung died in 1994.

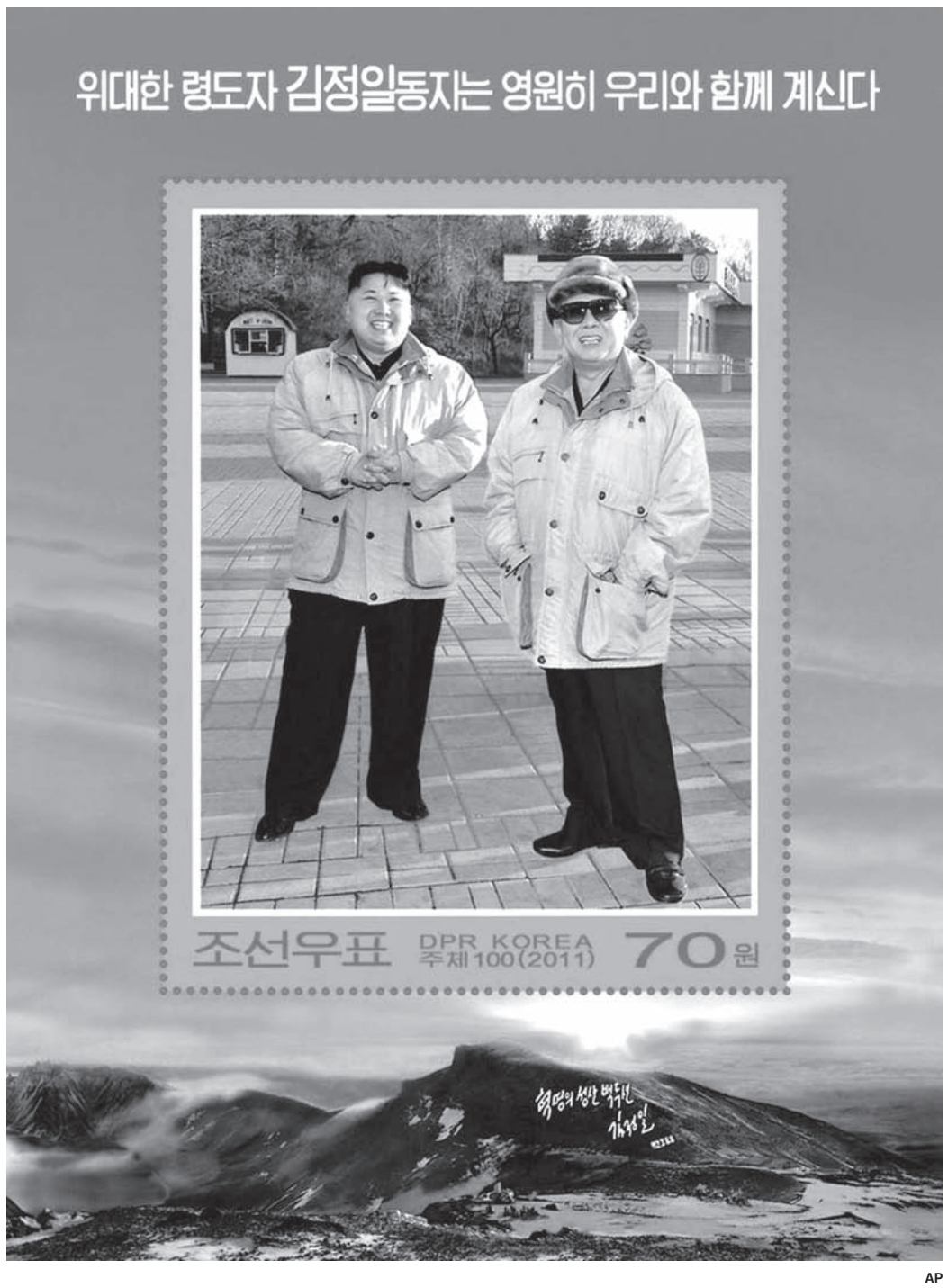
However, since then, Kim Jong Un has traded the parka for a dark, double-breasted winter overcoat—much like the jackets his grandfather favored.

THE CEREMONIES

Solemn and somber in mourning, Kim Jong Un followed the routine set by his father at Kim Il Sung's 1994 funeral. He bowed at three sides of his father's glass-encased casket at Kumsusan Memorial Palace, just as his father did 17 years earlier.

For the funeral, officials dusted off one of Kim Il Sung's Lincoln Continentals for the procession through the snowy streets of Pyongyang. Just as in 1994, mourners lined the street wailing.

But Kim Jong Un played an even more public role in the procession than his father in 1994. Barehanded and bareheaded, he walked with the hearse, right hand held up in a salute, left hand at times resting on the vehicle.



AP

This undated photo copy released by the Korean Central News Agency and distributed in Tokyo by the Korea News Service on Friday, Dec. 30, 2011 shows a commemorative postage stamp featuring Kim Jong Un, left, and his late father Kim Jong Il.

For many in Pyongyang, it was their first chance to see the new leader in person.

THE INSPECTIONS

Kim Jong Un wasted no time in wading into the public eye. His first inspection visit without his father was a well-documented New Year's Day trip to a tank unit with symbolic ties to his family and his nation's history. He laughed and clapped during his visit with the Seoul Ryu Kyong Su tank division, and even pulled officers close to give them a word of advice. He got busy inspecting bunks and testing the water faucets.

The division was the first North Korean unit to march into Seoul during the early days of the Korean War in 1950, and was a favorite unit of Kim Jong Il's. The visit sent a pointed message about Kim Jong Un's intention to uphold his father's "military first" policy, and gave North Koreans a glimpse of his style.

The photos and documentary footage were sent within two days of the visit—notably quick turnaround for state media, which in the last years of Kim Jong Il's life typically provided only still images of the aging leader.

Ahn said it seemed odd to him that state media would show Kim Jong Un's easy laughter with the troops just two weeks after his father's death.

"It is a sign of the urgency the North feels in trying to put behind the Kim Jong Il leadership," he said.

THE PROPAGANDA

New banners and posters in Pyongyang urge the people to "follow the leadership of respected Comrade Kim Jong Un" and "devotedly defend" Kim Jong Un.

Kim Jong Un also made his debut on a postage stamp: a 70-won stamp, equivalent to 50 U.S. cents at official exchange rates, depicts a smiling Kim Jong Un with his father, both clad in the same light gray parka.

His official portrait has not been made public yet, and it remains to be seen whether it will hang next to those of his father and grandfather in every building in North Korea.

Reports in South Korean media say Pyongyang's premier Mansudae Art Studio created a Jong Un portrait in 2010; it could be revealed as early as his birthday Sunday, predicted Cheong Seong-chang, a senior fellow at the Sejong Institute in South Korea.

North Koreans also show their loyalty by wearing pins of the Kims. But even today, still wear Kim Il Sung's visage pinned to their shirts, not Kim Jong Il's.

THE NICKNAMES

Kim Jong Un became known in North Korea as the "Young General" beginning in September 2010, when state media announced that he had been made a four-star general. He became "Respected General" or "Illustrious General" last year in signs that offered blessings to him, his father and grandfather.

The day Kim Jong Il's death was announced, state media referred to the son with a new, telling nickname: "Great Successor."

"Supreme commander" of the military; "supreme leader" of the people, party and army; "great leader": the nicknames began to echo those of his grandfather and father. The most affectionate remains "dear comrade" or "dear respected comrade."

Kim Il Sung ruled as president, and remains North Korea's "eternal president" long after his death.

Kim Jong Il ruled as chairman of the National Defense Commission, a position that under the constitution gave him authority as "supreme leader" of North Korea.

It remains to be seen which title will give Kim Jong Un authority as supreme leader under the constitution.

THE IDEOLOGY

Kim Jong Il's "military first" policy may serve as North Korea's main ideology for now under Kim Jong Un, but a new ideology will likely emerge, intended to prove to the people that he can raise their standard of living.

Analysts said the goal is to link Kim Jong Un more closely to the early, nation-building years of Kim Il Sung's rule rather than the economic hardship and famine of Kim Jong Il's era.

In the 1960s and 1970s, North Korea rebuilt quickly from the ashes of the Korean War with Soviet help, and its economy was stronger than that of rival South Korea. But natural disasters and outdated agricultural practices, compounded by the loss of Soviet aid, triggered a famine that killed hundreds of thousands of North Koreans in the mid- to late-1990s. Chronic food shortages persist.

"I expect North Korea to come up with more practical ideas that can help feed the people and strengthen the image of Kim Jong Un as someone who's capable of that," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul.

Koh added that Kim "has to demonstrate that he is a capable leader from now on."

Health & Fitness

Mixed advice in Europe over faulty breast implants

AP

Women affected by breast implants of the French brand Poly Implant Prothese, PIP, listen to lawyer Gilberto Andrea, left, outside the civil court in Caracas, Venezuela, Friday, Jan. 6, 2012.

By DAVID STRINGER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP)—European health authorities issued widely different recommendations Friday in dealing with potentially faulty French-made breast implants, with Germany and the Czech Republic following France in recommending their removal, while Britain insisted there isn't enough evidence to suggest they should be taken out in all cases.

Germany's Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices said on Friday it was recommending the removal of PIP breast implants "as a precautionary measure," while the Czech health ministry said about 2,000 Czech women with potentially faulty implants should have them removed.

But British Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said Friday that the U.K. had found no link between the implants—manufactured with non-medical grade silicone by the now-defunct French company Poly Implant Prothese, or PIP—and cancer.

However, his ministry said that silicone used by PIP "should not have been implanted in women in the first place," and offered to provide examinations and possible removals—in instances where doctors say they are necessary.

Women in Britain who had PIP implants fitted for medical reasons—mainly former cancer patients—by the state-funded National Health Service, or women who used a private cosmetic surgery clinic which no longer exists would be offered an assessment, and could have the implants removed for free if doctors believed it necessary, Lansley said.

Britain's NHS does not provide cosmetic surgery without a medical reason.

Lansley called on private medical centers to offer the same deal to patients who had paid for private sector cosmetic surgery.

"There is not sufficient evidence to recommend routine removal," he said, but added that Britain believed "private health care providers have a moral duty to offer the same service to their patients that we will offer to NHS patients."

Germany's drugs and medical devices institute said that its new advice went beyond a Dec. 23 recommendation that women affected should have their implants checked for possible ruptures. It said the change followed new advice from experts who had warned that silicon from such implants can leak over time even if there is no rupture.

"How urgent a removal is in any given case depends essentially on how long the patient has carried the implant," the institute's chairman, Walter Schwerdtfeger, said in a statement.

The institute said it didn't have information on how many women received such implants in Germany.

PIP's website says the company exported to more than 60 countries and was one of the world's leading implant makers. The silicone-gel implants in question were not sold in the United States.

France has said it will pay for some 30,000 French women to have their implants removed, after more than 1,000 ruptures of the PIP implants, which were pulled from the market in several countries in Europe and beyond due to fears they could rupture and leak silicone into the body. Colombia and Venezuela have made similar offers.

France's Health Safety Agency says the suspect PIP implants appear to be more rupture-prone than other types. Investigators also say PIP sought to save money by using industrial silicone instead of medical silicone.

According to estimates by national authorities, over 42,000 women in Britain received the implants, more than 30,000 in France, 9,000 in Australia and 4,000 in Italy. Nearly 25,000 of the implants were sold in Brazil.

Australia's medical watchdog, however, says health officials had found no evidence that the PIP implants had an increased risk of rupture in Australian women, and said lab testing of the silicone gel used indicated it was nontoxic to nearby tissue even if the implant did rupture.

In Venezuela, lawyer Emilia De Leon confirmed that about 400 Venezuelan women are suing companies that sold them PIP implants and demanding the firms cover medical expenses to have the products removed.

Lansley said Britain and France were cooperating over the issue and planned to consult other European countries in the hope of preventing similar problems in the future.

In the Czech Republic—where the implants were banned in 2010—the country's health ministry said it would negotiate with the country's health insurers on how to cover the cost of removals.

Those women who refuse to have the implants removed should undergo regular health checks, the ministry said in a statement. "No imminent risk of serious health problems has been proven," the ministry said.

Personal Trainer
A world of hurt
Regular, vigorous exercise can increase the risk of injuries that require a trip to the doctor; some important ones:
Hand injuries
Boxing, rock climbing, handball and basketball can injure bones or tendons; if injury is serious, get prompt medical attention; tendon repairs are most successful soon after injury
Head injuries
It is possible to be knocked unconscious in most sports; see a physician promptly, and don't return to vigorous activity for at least 24 hours
Shin splints
Repeated strain of muscles between shin bones causes pain; muscles swell, press on blood vessels; symptoms tend to disappear after a week or two of rest; surgery may be necessary in severe case
Knee injuries
Ligaments around knee joint and cartilage between bones are easily injured; X-rays or other imaging may be necessary to diagnose damage and then carry out minor repairs
March fracture
Repeated strain damages one or more of foot's metatarsal bones; pain in ball of foot; for treatment, foot is put in rigid or flexible cast and rested for a few weeks
Graphic: Paul Trap
Source: American Medical Association Home Medical Guide
© 2011 MCT

Life & Style

Muhammad Ali returning to Ky. for 70th birthday

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Muhammad Ali is coming home to Louisville to celebrate another milestone—his 70th birthday.

The iconic heavyweight boxing champion will bask in the limelight once again at a private birthday bash on the evening of Jan. 14 at the Muhammad Ali Center in downtown Louisville. Ali turns 70 on Jan. 17. The party will double as a fundraiser for the center—a cultural and education complex that also features a museum focusing on Ali's long career as a boxer, social activist and humanitarian.

"Louisville was the first to support Muhammad in his pursuit of gold," Lonnie Ali, the boxer's wife, said in a statement Saturday evening. "It is only fitting that Louisville and surrounding communities participate in this important celebration to mark his 70th birthday."

Ali Center spokeswoman Jeanie Kahnke said Saturday that Ali will be surrounded by old friends and people who made a difference in his life, including his longtime trainer Angelo Dundee. The party will feature a dinner, entertainment and speeches.

She described it as a "retrospective look and celebration" of Ali's life.

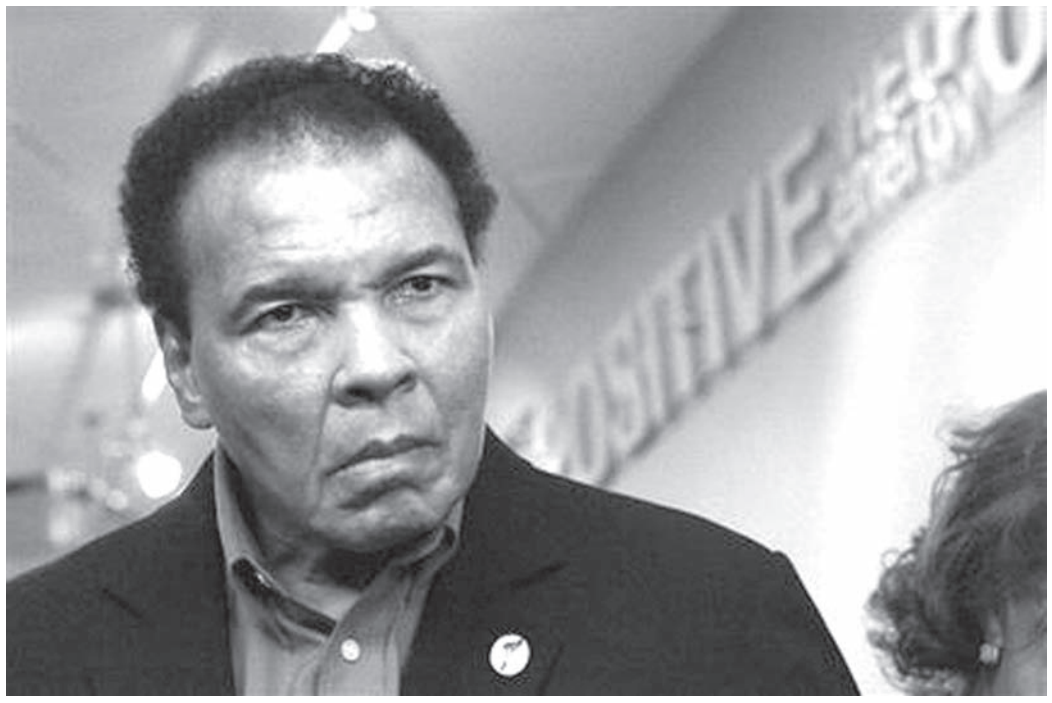
"It's significant for anyone to turn 70 years old," Kahnke said. "But for such a global icon, who has literally touched the lives of millions of people, it's a momentous event to celebrate."

A few tickets remained available for the $1,000-per-person event, she said.

Kahnke said that Muhammad and Lonnie Ali are looking forward to returning for the celebration. The Alis have a residence in Louisville but have recently been staying at their home in Arizona, she said. Ali is battling Parkinson's disease.

A series of community events—titled "Seven Days for Seven Decades"—will be offered from Jan. 15-21 at the center, touching on both the serious and fun sides of Ali.

"Community is an important part of Muhammad's life," Lonnie Ali said in her statement. "He was and is a master at building community around him."



AP

In this Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009 file photo, former heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali tours the new Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix.

She noted that Ali has engaged community support in the U.S. and around the world.

"In each community he visits, Muhammad involves people as stakeholders in his success," she said. "He makes people feel important, worthy and good about themselves and their actions. Muhammad continues to involve everyday people in his daily pursuit of life. He draws people in and makes them feel welcome. His support of community causes and individual efforts have been a way of life."

The week of events includes a "compassion fair" and workshops focusing on examples of compassion throughout the world. An exhibit will delve into the lives of people with dual African American and Native American ancestries. There will be screenings of films based on Ali's life.

On Jan. 15, a magician will perform in the center's main lobby—a recognition of Ali's love of magic tricks. Also, people visiting the center during that week will receive a discounted admission for bringing non-perishable food items for a food bank.

"We really want to thank the community that has supported and loved and embraced Muhammad," Kahnke said.

The center opened in 2005 and draws about 85,000 visitors a year.

Born Cassius Clay, Ali began his boxing career as an amateur in Louisville in the 1950s, won a gold medal in boxing in 1960 at the Olympics in Rome. He went on to become a three-time world heavyweight champion. He first won the title by defeating Sonny Liston in 1964. Ali was then stripped of his boxing title in 1967 for refusing to be drafted for military service during the Vietnam War.

Chinese video websites in court as industry grows

BEIJING (AP)—China's two biggest video websites are fighting in court over accusations they are misusing each other's programming as rivalry heats up in an industry that is luring viewers from bland state TV.

The conflict between Youku.com Inc. and Tudou Inc. is part of a struggle for dominance in an online market with nearly 400 million viewers and dozens of privately owned outlets that might represent the future of China's video watching and a lucrative advertising stream.

"Everybody is shooting for that golden demographic—the young people who are just out of school, have a lot of disposable income and that watch online video instead of television," said David Wolf, a marketing consultant in Beijing.

China's video websites started out imitating YouTube, relying on users to upload cat videos and other free material. But to lock in affluent viewers, the most ambitious started to imitate TV stations, paying to import foreign programs or create their own.

Still more viewers might be driven to video websites by a new government campaign to clean up China's airwaves and promote "socialist core values."

Rules that took effect Sunday strike at a hugely popular market segment for China's ambitious local broadcasters by slashing the number of reality, talent and dating shows they can show on satellite channels. State media say the number of prime-time entertainment shows plunged from 126 in December to just 38 this week.

That hurts local stations just as rising revenues allow online rivals to produce even more content, highlighted by the court fight between Youku and Tudou.

In a Dec. 16 lawsuit, Youku accused Tudou of stealing 60 of its programs including serials called "The Emperor's Harem," "Hip-Hop Office Quartet" and "Miss Puff."

Tudou says it has filed suit in Shanghai and Beijing accusing Youku of showing a Taiwanese series, "Kangxi Has Come," after Tudou obtained rights to it. The company claims Youku showed Japanese cartoons without the owner's permission.

The companies, both of which have shares traded on U.S. exchanges, accuse each other of trying to use legal claims to gain a competitive edge.

"Youku think they can live on free traffic without paying for the content," said Tudou CEO Gary Wang in a statement, "and they are trying to hide the fact that they are actually not as competitive as they pretend to be."

Both companies reject the accusations in the lawsuits.

"Tudou is playing games," said a Youku spokeswoman, Jean Shao.

Beijing has allowed such private companies to flourish with fewer of the controls imposed on China's entirely state-owned newspapers, TV and radio, possibly to avoid stifling what is seen as a promising high-tech industry.

AP

In this Jan. 3, 2012 photo, a man watches a movie on his smart phone in Shanghai, China.

Their surging popularity threatens to erode viewership for state TV, which Beijing sees as a tool to mold public opinion. That raises the threat communist leaders might tighten controls to protect their media presence.

Tighter regulation might "threaten private online video sites' very existence, and put investors at risk," said CMM Intelligence, a media consulting firm in Beijing, in a March report.

Chinese video websites make money from advertising and also have pay-per-view and other premium services. But while viewership and revenue are soaring, companies are losing money as costs for programs, marketing and Internet bandwidth rise.

The number of Chinese who watch online video jumped from 284 million in 2010 to 394 million in 2011, according to CMM Intelligence. It said the total might pass 445 million by the end of 2012.

Total industry revenue rose 139 percent over a year ago in the three months ending in September to 1.5 billion yuan ($238 million), according to Analysys International, a research firm. Youku had 25.6 percent of the market and Tudou 14.5 percent. Sohu Video, part of Internet portal Sohu Corp., was close behind at 13.3 percent.

Youku, founded in 2006, says it gets 200 million visitors a month. It reported quarterly revenues surged 129 percent over a year earlier but it still reported a 47.5 million yuan ($7.4 million) loss. Tudou, which says it has 90 million registered users, lost 55.6 million yuan ($8.7 million) despite a 52 percent jump in revenue.

Other outlets include Ku6.com, with shares traded in United States, and LeTV, listed on the Shanghai stock market.

Youku has a venture with state-owned China Telecom Ltd. to distribute video on mobile phones and announced a deal in August to show DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc.'s "Kung Fu Panda" movies on its premium service. Tudou said in November it will show TV Tokyo Corp.'s animated series online one hour after they air in Japan.

Online video also gives foreign broadcasters access to China, where they are barred from most cable systems. Viacom Inc.'s MTV Networks, the Discovery Channel and others have struck deals with partners such as search engine Baidu Inc. to distribute programs.

Managers of China Central Television and local state-owned broadcasters have tried to become more commercial. But the government bars foreign programs from prime time and any material deemed racy or vulgar, leading to a schedule heavy with family-friendly but dull historical sagas and variety shows.

Video websites, with looser controls, show dramas and comedies from the United States, Taiwan and Europe and their own programs. Viewers can download shows to watch on mobile phones during their morning subway ride.

Neither the government nor private researchers have reported on how many online viewers might have abandoned state TV outright.

"We all know it's taking place but nobody wants to go out and publicize the data," said Wolf, chairman of Wolf Group Asia. "The online video guys are terrified that if there are statistics that show the 'golden demographic' dropping TV to watch online video, then the government is going to come after them."

Ex-Fleetwood Mac guitarist Bob Weston dies at 64

LONDON (AP)—Bob Weston, a British guitarist who played with Fleetwood Mac, has died aged 64.

Police say Weston's body was found in his north London home on Tuesday after neighbors raised the alarm.

Police said Friday that his death was not being treated as suspicious. An autopsy revealed the causes of death as gastric intestinal hemorrhage, cirrhosis of the liver and throat problems.

Weston joined Fleetwood Mac in 1972 as replacement for Danny Kirwan, and played on the band's albums "Penguin" and "Mystery to Me."

But during an American tour the next year, Mick Fleetwood discovered Weston was having an affair with his wife, Jenny Boyd. Weston was fired.

He released several solo albums and played with musicians including Long John Baldry, Murray Head, Sandy Denny and Steve Marriott.

He is survived by a brother.

NBC says they weren't afraid of Chelsea's vodka

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—NBC's entertainment chief insists that it wasn't squeamishness over booze that got "vodka" dropped from the television version of Chelsea Handler's memoir.

Robert Greenblatt said Friday that the 2008 book's title, "Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea," was just too long. Initially, NBC considered just calling the show "Chelsea" but settled instead on "Are You There, Chelsea?" and it debuts on the network next Wednesday.

"There was no mandate from anyone saying don't put vodka in the title of the show," the entertainment president said.

Talk to the author, though, and that's not so clear. Handler said in a telephone conference call last month that "although there is plenty of drinking in the show, you can't have it in the title."

On Friday, Handler joked that "not everyone is into alcohol as much as I am." She said that "this is not cable, this is network" and said taking "vodka" out of the title could broaden the appeal of the show to include people who aren't big drinkers.

Handler has a part-time role in the show. Instead of playing the character Chelsea, she plays her born-again Christian sister. Laura Prepon of "That `70s Show" portrays Chelsea.

The Chelsea character, described by NBC as a "sexually dynamic advanced drinker," is jailed for driving under the influence of alcohol early in the show's history, according to a clip shown to reporters Friday.

"In real life I got a DUI once," Handler said. "I haven't gotten one since."

Handler appears in seven of the 13 episodes ordered by NBC. The comic, with her own late-night show on E! Entertainment, said she was too busy to do much more.

"It's a dream come true to have someone else portray me," she said, "because I've been living this life, and I'm over me."

AP

Actress and comedienne Chelsea Handler speaks during the panel discussion for the upcoming sitcom "Are You There, Chelsea?" at the Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour for NBC Universal in Pasadena , Calif. on Friday, Jan. 6, 2012.

MSNBC chief: No decision on Pat Buchanan's return

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—MSNBC's top executive said Saturday that he hasn't decided whether conservative commentator and author Pat Buchanan will be allowed back on the network.

Buchanan, a former GOP presidential candidate and a paid MSNBC contributor, hasn't been on the network since the publication of his book "Suicide of a Superpower" last October. The book has chapters titled "The End of White America" and "The Death of Christian America" and its author argues that the United States is in the "Indian summer of our civilization."

"When Pat was on his book tour, because of the content of the book, I didn't think it should be part of the national dialogue much less part of the dialogue on MSNBC," said MSNBC President Phil Griffin. The minority advocacy group Color of Change has circulated a petition urging MSNBC to fire Buchanan.

Buchanan did appear for an interview about his book in October on Fox News Channel's "Hannity," where host Sean Hannity said, "welcome out of exile."

Griffin would not discuss the length of Buchanan's contract with MSNBC or whether it would be renewed.

The conservative firebrand has seemed increasingly out of place on a network that has emphasized a liberal viewpoint on many of its programs in recent years. Last August, Buchanan went on "Morning Joe" to explain that he wasn't trying to slur President Barack Obama by referring to him as "your boy" during an on-air discussion with talk show host Al Sharpton. Meanwhile, "Morning Joe" hosts Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski acknowledged at a news conference Saturday that they considered offers from other networks in recent months, including CBS, which is launching a new morning show on Monday. Former "Morning Joe" producer Chris Licht is producing the new CBS show.

Scarborough said they concluded that they couldn't duplicate their show on broadcast television, specifically the lengthy interviews.

"We knew from the beginning that we had a great home at MSNBC that Phil had set up for us," Scarborough said. The three-hour weekday morning show begins at 6 a.m.

Griffin said MSNBC plans to tweak rivals Sunday with a newspaper ad that argues "there are many imitators, but there's only one `Morning Joe.'" It's timed to appear the day before CBS' show premieres and a week after CNN began its own new morning show with Soledad O'Brien.

Ex-Minneapolis *Tribune* editor, author Bailey dies

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Charles Waldo Bailey II, former editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune* and co-author of the Cold War thriller "Seven Days in May," has died of complications from Parkinson's disease, his daughter said Thursday. He was 82.

Bailey died Tuesday at the Lillian Booth Actors Home in Englewood, N.J., his daughter Victoria Bailey said.

"He was a newspaperman. He was a journalist. He loved newspapers and he really believed in the role of newspapers in the community," Victoria Bailey said. "His reporters, his writers really liked working for him."

A Boston native, Bailey became a *Tribune* reporter in 1950 after graduating from Harvard University. In 1954, he was assigned to the paper's Washington bureau, later becoming its chief.

He was named the morning *Tribune's* editor in 1972 and resigned a decade later over staff reductions following its merger with the afternoon Minneapolis Star. Bailey returned to Washington, where he was Washington editor for National Public Radio from 1984-87.

Bailey co-wrote three books with Fletcher Knebel, including "No High Ground," "Convention" and "Seven Days in May," about an attempted U.S. military coup. It was made into a 1964 movie directed by John Frankenheimer and starring Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas and Fredric March.

Bailey also wrote the 1991 solo novel, "The Land Was Ours," about a newspaper reporter in the Upper Midwest.

Victoria Bailey said her father "felt a strong commitment to the people of Minnesota."

"He was very clear and articulate that ... people in all parts of the country deserve a good, strong newspaper, and he really cared about Minnesota and the Upper Midwest," she said.

Bailey's wife, Ann Card Bailey, died in 2010. In addition to his daughter Victoria, survivors include another daughter, Sarah Bailey, and a sister, Joanna Hodgman.

A memorial service was planned Jan. 19 in Washington.

AP

In this photo made in the 1980s, Charles Waldo Bailey III, former editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, poses in the newsroom in Minneapolis.

New NBC chief says 'Community' coming back

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—After acknowledging that NBC had a "really bad fall," the network's entertainment chief moved swiftly Friday to assure viewers that "Community" and "Law & Order: SVU" aren't leaving.

Although the Thursday night comedy "Community" was taken off the midseason schedule, entertainment president Bob Greenblatt said that he wanted to "dispel any notion that it is quietly disappearing." He didn't say, however, when it would be back.

At a news conference, Greenblatt also aired a video clip of star Mariska Hargitay saying that she's committed to "Law & Order: SVU" through next year. She'll even get a love interest: Harry Connick Jr. has signed on for several episodes later this season.

For NBC, keeping any audience it still has is important. The fourth-place network has continued its slow decline this fall, with Sunday night football keeping its heart beating. Viewership was off 5 percent from last season, the Nielsen ratings company said.

"We had a really bad fall, worse than I had hoped for but about what I expected," Greenblatt said.

Still, he said that he hoped new shows like "The Voice," "Up All Night" and "Whitney" can provide building blocks for the future, even if they are only modest successes now.

NBC has been outspending its rivals in series development recently, following many years when the network kept such spending down. Greenblatt said NBC's new corporate owners, Comcast Corp., have shown a willingness to invest money and patience in rebuilding the network.

NBC has high hopes for the midseason series "Smash," about the competitive world of Broadway musicals. It debuts Feb. 6. Greenblatt seemingly tried to dampen expectations, given how hard it is to develop hits in network television these days.

"In this day and age, you need four or five shows to help things turn around," he said. "`Smash' could be one of those. I hope it is one of those. If it isn't, we're not going to go into receivership."

Greenblatt did not address reports that NBC is interested in Ryan Seacrest as a potential replacement for Matt Lauer on the "Today" show, whose contract ends this year.

"All of that is premature," he said. "It is our hope and belief that Matt will stay on the show beyond the length of his contract."

Comcast is talking with Seacrest, who plays a big role on the company's E! Entertainment cable network, about different things he could do. One idea NBC would be interested in is a network interview show, much like Barbara Walters has done on ABC.

Drew Barrymore engaged to Will Kopelman

NEW YORK (AP)—Drew Barrymore is engaged to art consultant Will Kopelman.

Barrymore's publicist confirmed the engagement Friday. The couple were reportedly engaged over the holidays in Sun Valley, Idaho. It will be the actress' third marriage.

Us Weekly first reported the engagement. A photo of the pair, in which Barrymore sports a diamond ring, was released to People magazine.

The 36-year-old Barrymore was briefly married to Jeremy Thomas in 1994 and to comedian Tom Green in 2001.

Kopelman is the son of former Chanel CEO Arie Kopelman.

AP

In this Nov. 15, 2011 file photo, actress Drew Barrymore, right, and boyfriend Will Kopelman attend The Museum of Modern Art Film Benefit tribute to Pedro Almodovar in New York.

Judge orders man to stay away from Selena Gomez

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—A civil judge on Friday granted Selena Gomez a three-year restraining order against a man accused of threatening to kill the singer-actress and of traveling from Illinois to try to meet her.

Superior Court Judge William D. Stewart granted the order, which requires Thomas Brodnicki to stay away from the "Wizards of Waverly Place" star and not attempt to contact her.

Another judge dropped a felony stalking charge against the Brodnicki, 46, last year after determining prosecutors hadn't proven he had caused fear in the star. Stewart twice delayed issuing a civil order until Brodnicki had an opportunity to respond.

Gomez, 19, did not appear at Wednesday's hearing. She wrote in a declaration filed in October that she was in extreme fear after learning that Brodnicki had threatened to kill her while he was on a psychiatric hold.

Prosecutors later alleged he stalked the actress between July and October.

Stewart noted that Brodnicki filed a declaration in December essentially consenting to the protective order and that the man with a history of mental illness had received "due process." He said Gomez had reasonable cause to afraid of Brodnicki, who did not attend Friday's hearing.

The order also covers Gomez's family.

AP

This Nov. 20, 2011 file photo shows Selena Gomez during arrivals to the 2011 American Music Awards, held at Nokia L.A. Live in Los Angeles.

Sheen's ex-wife won't have court appearance filmed

ASPEN, Colo. (AP)—Attorneys for Charlie Sheen's ex-wife have prevailed in keeping a celebrity-news website from airing her appearance in a Colorado courtroom on drug and assault charges.

The Aspen Times reports that a Pitkin County judge has denied a request from TMZ to air the Jan. 23 proceeding for Brooke Mueller (http://goo.gl/wsjmI). District Judge Gail Nichols said the live courtroom feed would "unduly detract from the solemnity, decorum and dignity of the court."

TMZ petitioned the court last month to access Mueller's first court appearance, where she is to answer to a felony charge of possession of cocaine with intent to distribute and a misdemeanor assault offense. Aspen police arrested the 34-year-old on Dec. 3 after a woman reported being assaulted at a nightclub.

Sheen and Mueller divorced last year.

NBC planning show for Betty White's 90th birthday

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Betty White says her plans for her upcoming 90th birthday might include "a little vodka on the rocks."

The tireless actress's big day on Jan. 17 seems to be exciting others more than her. NBC is airing a birthday special for White the day before and has picked up a "Candid Camera"-like prank show featuring senior citizens called "Betty White's Off Their Rockers."

"I didn't accomplish anything," White said Friday. "It just came up on me. I'm blessed with good health."

NBC has not yet put "Off Their Rockers," which White would host, on the schedule. White said she's on hand to make sure producers don't make any of the humor meanspirited. In most of the cases, young people are the butt of the show's jokes.

"It's the reverse psychology of the `poor old seniors,'" White said. "We've got a sense of humor, too, warped as it may be."

AP

In this Nov. 9, 2010 file photo, actress Betty White wears a U.S. Forest Ranger hat after being named an Honorary Forest Ranger by the U.S. Forest Service, at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

Comic Kathy Griffin gets Bravo network talk show

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Comic Kathy Griffin is never shy about offering her opinions. Soon she'll have a weekly outlet for them.

The Bravo network said Saturday that it will premiere "Kathy," a once-a-week talk show hosted by Griffin sometime this spring. The network hasn't decided when it will air regularly.

Bravo promised that "this will be the destination to get Griffin's thoughts on everything pop culture as she rants on the week's biggest headlines and tabloid gossip." The show will also feature stand-up comedy, celebrity interviews and taped segments.

In addition, Griffin will perform two stand-up comedy specials on Bravo this year.

Man stabbed at Gregg Allman concert in Tennessee

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—A man was stabbed during a Gregg Allman performance at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville and a concertgoer has been charged in the assault.

Forty-four-year-old Carl Darren Brothers has been released from the Metro Nashville Jail. He was charged with aggravated assault, public intoxication and disorderly conduct late Wednesday night.

Police say the man seated next to him, Ronald Sixt Jr., was treated for minor facial injuries.

Officers say Sixt apparently bumped into Brothers and the two argued, fought and then Brothers took a knife out of his back pocket and began stabbing Sixt while Allman was still on stage. Ryman security broke up the fight and called police.

A jail spokeswoman says there is no record of an attorney for Brothers.

Name change is a roadblock on couple's trip to the altar

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My fiance, "Kip," and I are being married next year and we have only one disappointment. It's about my keeping my last name. I don't want to take Kip's last name.

I have had the same name for 33 years and I do not believe a woman "has" to take her husband's name when they marry. However, the biggest issue for me is my fiance never knew his father, who left when Kip was a baby. I do not wish to take the name of a man who neither of us knows, and who had no positive influence on our lives. I'm part of a close-knit family, and I am proud to bear the name of my father—a hardworking, dedicated Vietnam veteran.

Am I out of line? We will accept your answer because we are unable to resolve this ourselves.

STANDING MY GROUND IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR STANDING: While most women still change their names to their husband's (or hyphenate them), those who don't usually have established themselves in a career in which they are known by their maiden name. Others fear that if they change their names they'll lose their identity.

No one can or should decide this for you. However, if Kip did know his dad and the man was a fine, upstanding citizen, would you feel differently? Remember, you are marrying Kip, not his father, and I assume your fiance is a wonderful person. Given your logic, because he had no relationship with his father, should he change his name to yours? Please make no decisions about this until you two have talked this out more fully.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My siblings and I never hear from my grandmother unless she's in town, and then it's usually for one day out of the two weeks she's here. She never calls on holidays, birthdays or just to say hello. Yes, we call her on these special days.

We have other grandparents who wouldn't let a week go by without calling to ask how we are, how we are doing in school or just to talk.

My mom is a grandma to my oldest sister's children and when she doesn't see or hear from them within a week, she'll call or visit them. (By the way, my grandmother is retired, very healthy and travels. When she does, we don't even get a postcard!) What's wrong with her?

HURT FEELINGS IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR HURT FEELINGS: I agree that you didn't get the standard-issue doting, cookie-baking grandmother. Not knowing her, I can't explain the reason for her distant behavior, but I'm positive it has nothing to do with you personally. She may be preoccupied with her own life, or it may have something to do with the relationship she has with your parents. If you really want the answer to your question, the person you should ask is your grandmother the next time she comes to town.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: When I'm out in public, there's always someone saying, "Oh, you're so TINY!" or, "I didn't see you down there," or, "You're so CUTE!" Abby, I am 83 years old with white hair. I was never tall to begin with, and I have lost close to 4 inches due to a bad back (with constant pain), spine surgery and osteoporosis.

Please remind your readers to abstain from making remarks about a person's size. I don't feel "cute," and I don't appreciate the constant reminders about my disability. Am I too sensitive?

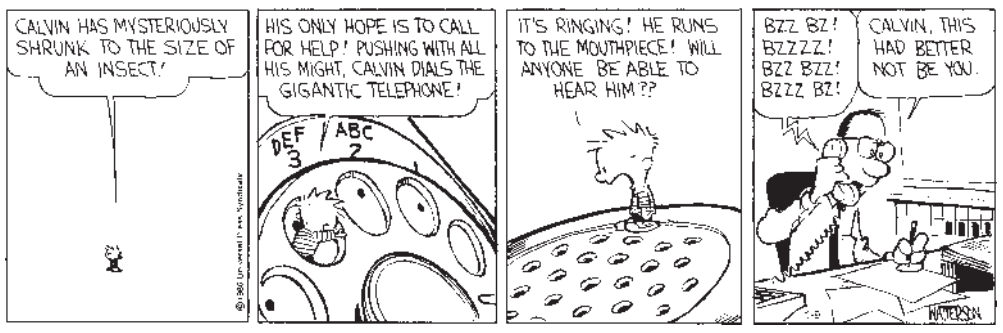
VERTICALLY CHALLENGED IN ANN ARBOR, MICH.

DEAR VERTICALLY CHALLENGED: I don't think so. You have stated your feelings very well, but I'm pleased to remind readers that comments about someone's personal appearance ("You're so tall," "You're so small, "You're so thin") can hit a sore spot, and to refrain from saying the first thing that comes to mind because it may be rude or hurtful.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


CALVIN HAS MYSTERIOUSLY SHRUNK TO THE SIZE OF AN INSECT!
HIS ONLY HOPE IS TO CALL FOR HELP! PUSHING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, CALVIN DIALS THE GIGANTIC TELEPHONE!
DEF 3 ABC 2
IT'S RINGING! HE RUNS TO THE MOUTHPIECE! WILL ANYONE BE ABLE TO HEAR HIM??
BZZ BZ! BZZZZ! BZZ BZZ! BZZZ BZ!
CALVIN, THIS HAD BETTER NOT BE YOU.
WATTERSON

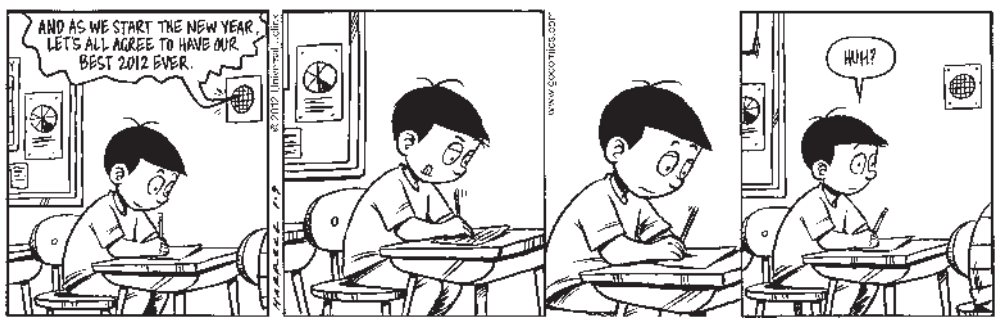
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I'M A HAPPY CAT! I'M A HAPPY CAT!
UH...
BOY, THAT DONUT WORE OFF FAST
JIM DAVIS 1-9
Distributed by Universal Uclick www.facebook.com/garfield
©2012 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.

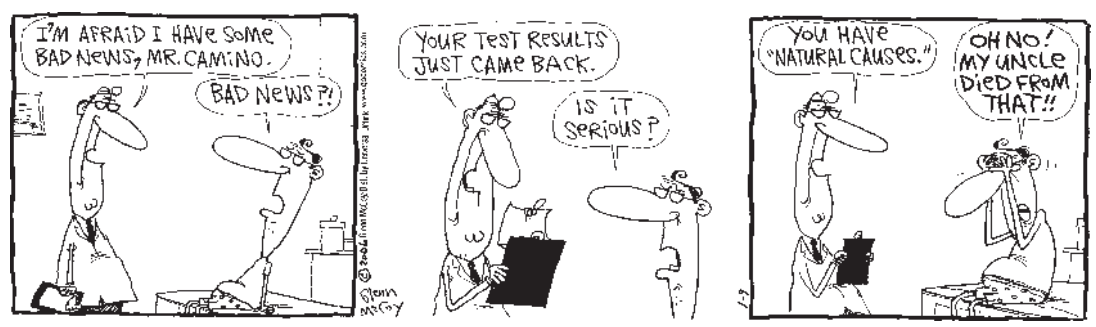
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I'M AFRAID I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS, MR. CAMINO.
BAD NEWS?!
YOUR TEST RESULTS JUST CAME BACK.
IS IT SERIOUS?
YOU HAVE "NATURAL CAUSES."
OH NO! MY UNCLE DIED FROM THAT!!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

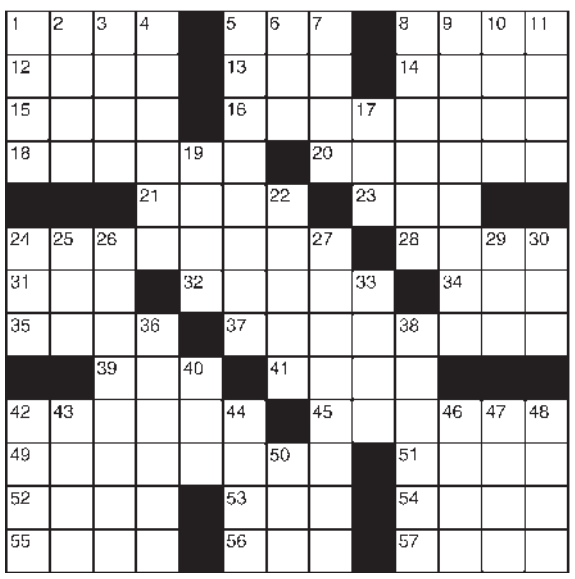
ACROSS
1 Study hard
5 Unruly group
8 Oscar-winner Kedrova
12 Get up
13 Yoko of music
14 Soon, in verse
15 "Zounds!"
16 Obama, e.g.
18 Elk
20 Alternative to boxers
21 Sidewalk eatery
23 Wager
24 Turn to rubble
28 Discourteous
31 Anger
32 Admit
34 Capek play
35 Obi, for example
37 Outward behavior
39 Work on the soundtrack
41 Roof overhang
42 Slowly, in music
45 Duration
49 Insanity
51 Continental coin
52 Pub orders
53 Wall-climbing plant
54 War god
55 Fine spray
56 Caribbean or Coral
57 Fat

DOWN
1 Ship's staff
2 Latvia's capital
3 Pronto, on a memo
4 Physician
5 Adapted
6 Individual
7 Flop on stage
8 More frilly
9 As part of an exchange
10 Bread unit
11 Picnic invaders
17 Sphere
19 Lofty
22 Cosmetician Lauder
24 Insult (Sl.)
25 Historic time
26 Partners of messieurs
27 Everest, e.g.
29 Twosome
30 Blunder
33 Actress Campbell
36 Least minuscule
38 Virgil hero
40 Crib
42 Leading man?
43 Sandwich shop
44 Elevator name
46 Mentor
47 Genealogy chart
48 Emcee
50 "— been had!"

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	F	U	S	E	S	■	A	T	T	E	S	T
T	O	P	P	L	E	■	F	R	E	S	C	O
A	U	T	U	M	N	■	R	A	N	C	O	R
I	R	O	N	■	A	V	O	W	■	A	W	E
■	■	■	K	A	T	O	■	L	A	P	■	■
Y	E	S	■	S	O	Y	A	■	B	I	A	S
A	C	Q	U	I	R	E	D	T	A	S	T	E
P	O	U	R	■	S	U	R	I	■	M	E	X
■	■	■	E	L	F	■	R	I	N	K	■	■
A	V	E	■	L	I	S	A	■	E	A	C	H
D	I	G	S	I	N	■	T	R	F	B	I	F
D	E	E	P	E	N	■	I	N	P	L	A	Y
S	W	E	A	R	S	■	C	A	S	E	D	■

Saturday's answer 1-9



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kate Middleton, 30; Dave Matthews, 45; Joely Richardson, 47; Jimmy Page, 68.

Happy Birthday: Don't jump to conclusions or let impulse get the better of you. Picking the right time to execute your plans will be vital to your success. You can do extremely well if you use common sense. Your intuition will not steer you wrong as long as you don't doubt your ability. Courage is your strength. Your numbers are 9, 15, 21, 24, 35, 38, 44.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Rethink your strategy regarding home improvement projects or a domestic move. Emotions will be difficult to control and someone will take advantage of your vulnerability if you are too open. Question anyone who is giving you the runaround. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You'll accomplish more working from home. Take care of your emotional and physical well-being. Finish what you start and make plans to venture down new avenues. Diversify as much as possible and put together an offer that will be hard to refuse. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't talk about contracts, money matters or your health if you don't want others to pry or criticize you. Keep conversations light and focus more on physical challenges where you stand a better chance of coming out on top. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll be feeling sentimental and should consider spending time re-evaluating your current situation to ensure that you are moving in the right direction. Plan to clear up any unfinished chores at home that will help clear the way for future projects. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You'll be inquisitive and looking for change. Don't be too impulsive, or you may end up heading down the wrong path. It's important to try things out before you implement changes you'll have to live with for a long time. Stabilize your situation. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Spread your wings and try new things. Open lines of communication with people who have as much to offer you as you do them. Learning should be high on your list, as well as expanding your interests and your circle of friends. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't get into a disagreement over something that isn't that important. Don't waste your energy trying to impress someone negative. Make worthwhile changes to your domestic surroundings and you'll find it easier to accomplish your goals. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Listen to your inner voice and you will make the right choice. Be delicate in dealing with someone you've known for a long time, or you could ruin your friendship. Offering someone help will bring you a high return. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Getting together with friends, your lover or people in your community will lead to interesting observations and greater mutual respect. Travel plans or executing a project that will lead to self-improvement should be on your agenda. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Decisiveness will help a financial or medical situation. Use the space you live in to generate more interest in what you have to offer. A partnership may need some rules put into place in order to move forward positively. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Keep interaction with authority figures to a minimum. You will keep control of your current situation if your plans remain a secret. Romance is on the rise, and an original approach to entice someone you love will pay off. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): What you put in, you will get back. Take on a challenge that tests your skills and you'll show everyone what you have to offer. Expect someone to make a last-minute change. Don't let this influence what you do. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are steadfast, open-minded and energetic. You are sensitive but firm.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6			4	5				7
		3		1	7	5		
	7		6				2	
	2			7		9		5
3	4						7	6
9		7		4			3	
	3				8		9	
		8	2	9		7		
4				3	5			8

Difficulty Level ★ 1/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Saturday's SUDOKU Answer

5	3	2	7	6	9	1	4	8
4	7	6	1	8	2	5	9	3
9	8	1	3	5	4	2	6	7
3	2	7	6	4	5	8	1	9
6	5	4	9	1	8	3	7	2
8	1	9	2	7	3	4	5	6
2	4	3	5	9	7	6	8	1
1	9	5	8	2	6	7	3	4
7	6	8	4	3	1	9	2	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/2

©2010 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THINGS THAT MEN LOVE **Solution: 7 letters**

R	R	N	O	I	T	C	A	F	E	C	I	G	A	R
E	E	E	E	U	N	W	I	N	D	C	N	I	E	E
L	W	M	C	W	T	R	U	T	H	I	I	B	S	N
A	O	O	O	L	S	D	H	B	P	K	R	V	B	N
X	P	W	M	T	I	P	O	M	E	A	G	O	E	I
I	O	A	P	O	E	N	A	O	B	E	A	N	Ⓓ	D
N	K	T	E	O	V	C	E	P	R	T	R	Ⓐ	I	M
G	E	C	T	L	V	I	O	R	E	S	Ⓔ	D	I	S
S	R	H	I	S	I	I	E	N	I	Ⓡ	R	W	S	H
E	N	E	T	T	R	S	D	S	T	I	S	I	C	A
I	C	S	I	R	Y	A	T	E	V	R	L	U	D	D
B	I	M	O	N	E	Y	C	E	O	E	O	E	E	E
B	S	M	N	L	R	O	M	A	N	C	E	L	A	S
O	U	T	R	E	C	N	O	C	G	P	E	E	L	S
H	M	S	R	E	K	A	E	N	S	P	O	R	T	S

© 2012 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Join us on Facebook 1/9

Action, Barber, Beer, Boat, Camping, Cars, Cigar, City, Competition, Concert, Control, Couch, Deal, Device, Dinner, Drive, Hobbies, Humor, Lead, Listen, Money, Movies, Music, Newspapers, Outdoors, Poker, Power, Read, Recliner, Relaxing, Remote, Romance, Shades, Silence, Sing, Sleep, Sneakers, Speed, Sports, Steak, Swim, Tools, Truth, Unwind, Video, Watches, Women

Last Saturday's Answer: Corvette

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Lower Navy Hill Apts. Newly renovated bldg., 3BR & 2BTH. Rooms w/A/C & fully furnished. Back-up generator. Free Wi-Fi, EPA Solar Water Heater. Laundry area. Nightime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Sunset View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nightime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

WANTED TO BUY

Used Cars Wanted.
2002 above, Toyota preferred,
Cash your car. Pls call 888-2205

FOR SALE

2007 Toyota Corolla, silver, excellent condition 53,900 miles. Please call 287-7676.

WHATZIT Solution:
For instance

FRANCISCO DIAZ CABRERA and
VIVIAN PALACIOS CABRERA
Tuturam Drive, San Vicente Village
P.O. Box 501705 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 287-9552 / 888-5749

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:	]	**FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 11 - 0615**
NICHOLAS FRANCIS PALACIOS CABRERA An Incompetent,	]	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By	]	
FRANCISCO DIAZ CABRERA and VIVIAN PALACIOS CABRERA Petitioners	]	

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Appointment of Guardianship for the above-named by Francisco Diaz Cabrera and Vivian Palacios Cabrera, Petitioners, was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court and is open for review at the office of the Clerk of the said Court in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A HEARING of said petition for Guardianship will be held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI, before the Associate Judge Perry B. Inos on the 2nd day of February, 2012 at 9:30 A.M. or as soon as thereafter

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

SGH Saipan Grand Hotel
A TanHoldings Company

Position: (1) FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER
Qualifications: Strong background and experience in Food & Beverage preferably in the hospitality industry. Possess the ability to work quickly, accurately and independently in a fast-paced environment. 5 years work experience required preferably in a hotel. Supervisory duties include instructing; assigning, reviewing and planning work of others; maintaining standards; coordinating activities; allocating recommending and approving employee promotions, transfers and discipline, and recommending discharge. Inspects restaurant, picnic areas and cart groupings for safety, food quality and presentation, associate and guest interaction, and organization and cleanliness of front lines, kitchen and storage areas, etc. Recommends the purchase of additional / replacement equipment; obtains price quotes for and purchases supplies and other food / non-food products. Ensures locations prepare, present and serve food on a timely basis. Ensure areas are monitored and any variance from specifications corrected. Coordinates with the Food Purchasing area to develop, set and review menu cost, retail pricing and recipe cards including creating new food menu items and ways to present food attractively. Must be able to work a variable schedule on occasion, including early morning, evenings and/or weekends.

Position: (1) EXECUTIVE CHEF
Qualifications: 5 years work experience as a Sous Chef is required and preferably in the hospitality industry. The executive chef will train and manage kitchen personnel and supervise/coordinate all related culinary activities; estimate food consumption and requisition or purchase food; select and develop recipes; standardize production recipes to ensure consistent quality; establish presentation technique and quality standards; plan and price menus; ensure proper equipment operation/maintenance; and ensure proper safety and sanitation in kitchen. The executive chef may cook selected items or for select occasions. The executive chef may oversee special catering events and may also offer culinary instruction and/or demonstrate culinary techniques. The executive chef directly supervises kitchen personnel with responsibility for hiring, discipline, performance reviews and initiating pay increases. Typically reports to a food service director.

Position: (1) ROOMS DIVISION MANAGER
Qualifications: 5 years work experience preferably in the hotel industry. Able to plan, direct, and/or coordinate activities for the facility ensuring enjoyable experience for vacationing families and business travelers. Monitor departmental costs to ensure performance against budget. Must be able to solve problems quickly. Initiative, self-discipline and effective communication and interpersonal skills are essential. Proficient in Microsoft Office applications. Attend to crisis or emergency situations and perform service recovery. The ability to display a high degree of professionalism and integrity as befitting a member of management.

Position: (1) GUEST RELATION AGENT
Qualifications: 2 years work experience in providing quality customer service, preferably in hotel operations. Guest Relation Agent is responsible for providing guests fast, friendly and efficient service for the Chinese Tourim. Must have knowledge in Microsoft Office applications. Must have outstanding ability to perform several tasks at once. Must be able to work a flexible schedule including weekends, nights and holidays. Foreign language speaking skill is highly preferred.

Position: (1) TRAINING MANAGER
Qualifications: Minimum of 4 years work experience and training and must be a college graduate. Provides leadership and expertise for all Asia Pacific Hotel Saipan properties, primarily in tasks or functions of training, organizational development and employee relations and secondarily to provide assistance with programs of the Human Resources Division, to include but are not limited to quality control, work measurement, work methods and supervisory development. Consulting with other managers to identify training needs Drawing up an overall training plan managing a training budget producing materials for in-house training working with training providers to develop suitable course content evaluating the success of both individual training and the overall programmed. Managing regular staff appraisals and reviews, making sure staff have opportunities for ongoing development.

Position: (1) PROMOTIONS (EVENTS) MANAGER
Qualifications: Minimum of 2 years work experience and must be a college graduate. Must have working knowledge on overall hotel operations, sales and marketing promotions, departmental planning coordination of projects, activities, computer operation marketing, promotions, people management, different cultures and nationalities. Creating and managing a detailed budget is often a key component of event planning. When the client is a government organization, the coordinator must be aware of all applicable laws and ethics concerns. Hotel event manager is responsible for producing an outline of the event's needs. This outline includes such details as meeting space, lodging for guests, food and drink accommodations, telecommunications, audio-visual needs and transportation. Event coordinators also draw up a contract for the client to sign, spelling out all of the details agreed upon. Ability to speak a foreign language will be a plus.

P.O. Box 500369, Saipan, MP 96950-0369 • TeL (670) 234-6601 • Fax. (670) 234-0410

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

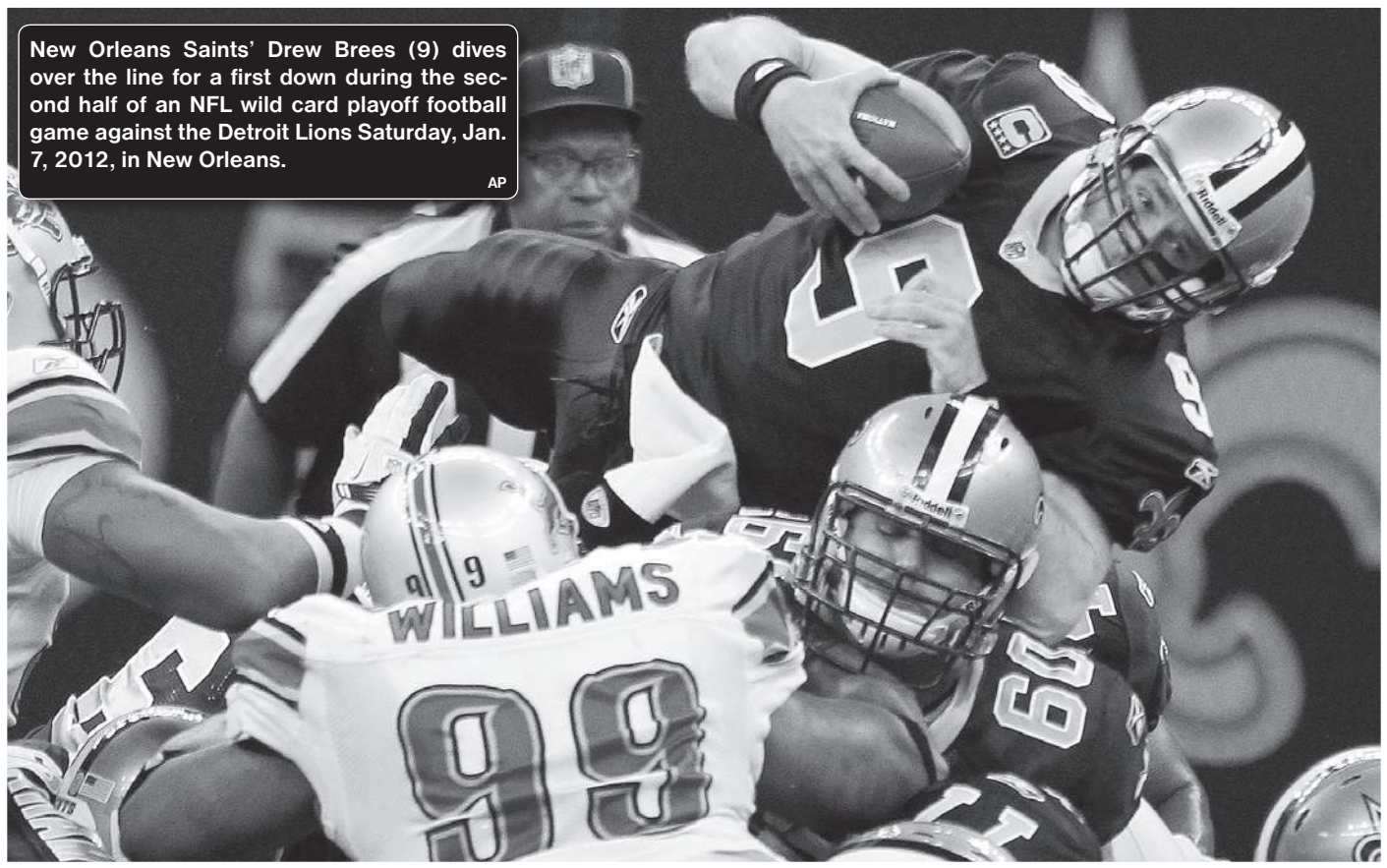
INSTANT
INSTANT
INSTANT
INSTANT

WHATZIT? © 2012 www.whatzit.com Distributed by Universal Uclick

www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Saints open playoffs with victory over Lions



New Orleans Saints' Drew Brees (9) dives over the line for a first down during the second half of an NFL wild card playoff football game against the Detroit Lions Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012, in New Orleans.
AP

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints are pouring on the points, racking up the wins and rewriting the record books nearly every time they play.

Things sure are rollin' on the river.

Brees led an unstoppable offense by throwing for 466 yards and three touchdowns, and New Orleans dominated the second half for a 45-28 NFC wild-card victory over the Detroit Lions on Saturday night.

New Orleans broke the postseason mark for total yards with 626, beating the record set 49 years ago.

"We were pulling out all the stops," Brees said. "We play aggressive. We're not going to apologize for that. That gives guys in the huddle a lot of confidence. We're not going to pull the reins back. It's pedal to the medal."

Brees hit on 33 of 43 passes while throwing for the most yards in a regulation playoff game. He highlighted his night with three completions of at least 40 yards.

"We just focus on winning. We're not focused on yards and records," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "I'm serious when I say that."

As usual, the quarterback had plenty of help from an offense that set an NFL record for yards from scrimmage this season (7,474), outgaining Detroit on the ground 167 yards to 32. The Saints (14-3) will travel to San Francisco (13-3) for next Saturday's second-round game.

Matthew Stafford threw for 380 yards and three TDs for the Lions (10-7), who simply could not keep pace in their first playoff appearance since the 1999 season. They have lost seven straight postseason games.

"It's a learning experience for the whole team. We'll get better. We'll be back," Lions coach Jim Schwartz said. "Obviously it hurts right now."

All-Pro receiver Calvin Johnson had 12 receptions for 211 yards and two touchdowns in his playoff debut for Detroit, but that was not nearly enough as the Saints' defense responded in the fourth quarter with two interceptions by Jabari Greer.

"We did make the playoffs this year and that's a great accomplishment," Johnson said. "We have some things to work on and we will. We know what we have to do to make the next step."

The teams combined for 1,038 yards, tying an NFL playoff record set by Buffalo and Miami on Dec. 30, 1995. The Superdome will likely host a much different contest on Monday night, when defensive stalwarts LSU and Alabama meet for the BCS national title. Fans in the dome cheered wildly for the LSU band as it played before the game and at halftime, then enjoyed a second half that culminated in what they hope will be the first of two Big Easy celebrations in three nights.

Pierre Thomas finished with 66 yards and one touchdown rushing, while Sproles added 51 yards, two scores and several other clutch plays.

Marques Colston overcame an early fumble with seven catches for 120 yards, including a 40-yarder to set up Jimmy Graham's short TD grab.

Robert Meachem had four catches for 111 yards, including a 56-yard score. Devery Henderson added a 41-yard touchdown reception.

New Orleans showed guts and got a little good fortune on a decisive 14-play, 80-yard scoring drive in the fourth quarter. The Saints ran Sproles around the left end on fourth-and-2 at the Lions 40 and gained 3 yards. Soon after, Brees' pass as he was clobbered by Nick Fairley went right through the hands of defensive back Aaron Berry.

Berry would regret that drop two plays later as Sproles bolted 17 yards to make it 31-21.

Stafford tried to get some of that back quickly, throwing deep for Titus Young, but Greer ran under it and picked it off. Four plays later, Brees spotted Meachem behind blown coverage for his long score to make it 38-21.

The Lions became only the second visiting team all year to lead at halftime in the Superdome, where the Saints were unbeaten during the regular season.

"So going into halftime at a deficit, we just realized, `Listen, just bear down, one play at a time, one drive at a time,'" Brees said, "and I think we scored on every drive in the second half. I guess that's what you hope for."

New Orleans has won nine in a row overall.

The Saints opened the second half by driving 78 yards to take their first lead on Brees' 31-yard pass to Henderson. New Orleans then widened its lead to 24-14 with a 92-yard drive that included what may have been a favorable spot on Colston's third-down grab at the Saints 18. Later, Brees converted a risky dive over the pile on fourth-and-1 at the New Orleans 38 to sustain the drive before finding Colston for a 40-yard gain to the Detroit 3. Brees hit Graham for a score on the next play.

"It was fourth and inches and we felt like we had a rhythm going," Brees said. "Obviously it was a gutsy call but we've been known to make those types of calls."

The Lions fought back with a quick 80-yard scoring drive highlighted by Stafford's 42-yard completion to Johnson at the Saints 2, setting up Stafford's dive for the pylon on a bootleg that made it 24-21 late in the third quarter.

Detroit could not have planned a much better start to its first playoff game since the '99 season.

Stafford completed five of his first six throws for 70 yards, starting with a 22-yard completion to Johnson on the second play from scrimmage. A 10-yard strike to reserve tight end Will Heller gave the Lions a 7-0 lead.

New Orleans responded by quickly driving into Lions territory, but Colston was stripped by Stephen Tulloch on the 18-yard line and Justin Durant recovered. It was a rare lost fumble for the Saints, who had an NFL low and franchise record low five during the regular season.

New Orleans found the end zone on its next drive to tie it at 7, but Stafford led the Lions right back downfield, hitting Johnson in the back of the end zone for a 13-yard score.

The Saints then fumbled a second time in Detroit territory when Brees was stripped just before throwing by defensive end Willie Young and the ball squirted to Durant for his second recovery. Durant wanted to return it, but the play was inexplicably blown dead. What might have been a touchdown return instead became a stalled drive.

The Saints thought they had tied it when Colston's catch in the back of the end zone was ruled a touchdown, but it was overturned on replay and New Orleans wound up settling for John Kasay's 24-yard field goal and a 14-10 halftime deficit.

Texans win first playoff game, 31-10, over Bengals

HOUSTON (AP)—Andre Johnson hugged his coach at the end of Houston's first playoff victory—a moment a decade in the making.

"This is something not just for me, but for the whole organization," the Texans star receiver said. "It's a very special feeling. That's probably the most I've smiled in a long time."

As well he should.

Johnson, the face of this 10-year old franchise, scored on a 40-yard pass that powered the Texans to a 31-10 victory over the bungling Cincinnati Bengals on Saturday in an AFC wild-card game.

Johnson had plenty of help, too, from rookies J.J. Watt and T.J. Yates to running back Arian Foster's two touchdowns and 153 yards.

Watt came through with a leaping interception return for a touchdown late in the first half, Yates threw a pinpoint pass to Johnson in the third quarter and Foster followed with his second touchdown—a 42-yard run in the fourth quarter—to finish off the Bengals (9-8).

Houston will play at Baltimore (12-4) next Sunday, a rematch of a regular-season game won by the Ravens.

"I'm just very proud of all the guys, and the job they did," Texans coach Gary Kubiak said. "Hopefully, there are some more to come."

The Bengals were in the playoffs for the third time in seven seasons, but haven't advanced since beating the Houston Oilers following the 1990 season. They were done in this time by mistakes and a lack of pass protection.

"We have to get beyond this," Bengals coach Marvin Lewis said. "We play in a very difficult division. We have to win games in the division, that is important and it sets up opportunities like this, all the time."

Watt returned the first of rookie Andy Dalton's three interceptions 29 yards for a score that broke a 10-all tie with 52 seconds left in the half. It sent the full house of 71,725 fans at Reliant Stadium into a frenzy, and the Texans into the locker room with all the momentum.

"You can see that they were all so proud of their team," Houston owner Bob McNair said of the team's long-suffering fans. "We want to have a team everybody can be proud of and want to feel an attachment to. I think they have that."

Dalton was 24 of 42 for 257 yards, while Yates was 11 of 20 for 159 yards in the first playoff game in the Super Bowl era matching two rookie quarterbacks. Foster's first TD was an 8-yard run in the first quarter.

The Texans' second-ranked defense had its best performance in several weeks, sacking Dalton a season-high four times. Houston also forced four turnovers.

"We got back to our type of football," Kubiak said, "and that was the key."

Houston used six draft picks on defensive players. The Texans took Watt with the 11th overall pick, a cornerstone for the reconstruction of the defense. He started all 16 games and led the team with 13 tackles for loss.

But he'd never picked off a pass.

Watt saw this one coming, measuring his jump when Dalton dropped back and snatching the ball with both hands. He sprinted to the end zone as the capacity crowd erupted, and he raised both hands after reaching the end zone.

"I was really just trying to put my hands up and get in the way of the passing lane," the 6-foot-5 Watt said. "It happened to kind of stick. I realized I had the ball so I just ran to the end zone just trying not to fall down."

Watt became the sixth defensive linemen to return an interception for a touchdown in postseason history—excluding the Super Bowl—and the first rookie to do it.

"It changed the momentum of the game," Houston linebacker Brian Cushing said.

Dalton rolled his eyes and shook his head as he walked to the Cincinnati bench and watched the replay on the giant scoreboard. It was just his second interception in his last seven games.

"We feel like we have a bright future," Dalton said. "It's still unfortunate that it ended this way."

The Bengals outplayed the Texans for most of the first half before that, holding down Houston's offense and controlling time of possession.

Late in the third quarter, Yates got away with a pass that safety Chris Crocker simply dropped. Three plays later, Johnson broke free from cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones and caught Yates' pass down the sideline to put Houston up 24-10.

"It was a touchdown if I would have caught it," Crocker said. "They made those big plays and we didn't and that's why they're moving on."

As Johnson rested on the bench, Foster walked up to him and gave him a bow, the running back's customary celebration after a touchdown. Foster has said that the bow is a Hindu gesture of respect.

The Texans rallied past the Bengals on Dec. 11 in Cincinnati to earn their first playoff berth. But they didn't look like they'd last very long after dropping their last three regular-season games.

Johnson said the losing streak proved to be beneficial.

"Everybody was riding high, the city was going crazy, we were in the playoffs for the first time," Johnson said. "Over those last three weeks, that brought us back down to reality and let us know what we needed to do."

James sets up win for Wade-less Heat

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)—LeBron James returned to the Miami lineup and scored 22 of his 32 points in the first quarter, setting up the Heat's 101-90 victory over the New Jersey Nets in the NBA on Saturday despite still being without Dwyane Wade.

Wade missed his third straight game with a bruised left foot, but James had the game under control by the time his All-Star teammate arrived at his seat on the bench.

James made his first seven shots and showed no effects from the sprained left ankle that forced him to miss a game. The NBA's leading scorer added nine assists and seven rebounds.

Chris Bosh added 16 points after a slow start as the Heat won their third straight and ran the NBA's best record to 8-1.

Kris Humphries tied a career high with 25 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Nets, who shot just 33.7 percent.

AP

Miami Heat forward LeBron James, left, is fouled by New Jersey Nets forward Kris Humphries during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012 in Newark, N.J.

Mavericks 96, Hornets 81

In Dallas, Vince Carter and Ian Mahinmi had 13 points each as Dallas handed New Orleans its sixth consecutive loss.

Carter and Mahinmi led a balanced scoring attack for the Mavericks, who won their fourth straight at home and had six players scoring in double figures.

Al-Farouq Aminu had 15 points and 12 rebounds to lead New Orleans, which was without three players who are in its regular rotation. Jason Smith missed the game after the death of his grandmother. Guard Eric Gordon (bruised right knee) and forward Trevor Ariza (groin strain) were also out.

Knicks 103, Pistons 80

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Amare Stoudemire scored 22 points to lead New York to an easy win over Detroit.

Mike Bibby added 16 for the Knicks, who led 64-42 at halftime and by 29 after three. Bibby has scored 27 points over his past two games after scoring just seven through New York's first six.

Brandon Knight led the Pistons with 19 points.

Detroit guard Rodney Stuckey sat out with a groin injury, and the Pistons were also without forwards Austin Daye and Charlie Villanueva, who had sore ankles.

Thunder 98, Rockets 95

In Houston, Kevin Durant hit a jumper with 22 seconds left and nailed two free throws to give Oklahoma City a win over Houston.

Durant finished with 27 points and six rebounds, while Russell Westbrook added 25 points and six assists for the Thunder.

Luis Scola had a season-high 28 points and seven rebounds for the Rockets, who have lost four straight games. Houston had a chance at the end but Goran Dragic threw the ball out of bounds with less than a second remaining.

Hawks 109, Bulls 94

In Atlanta, Josh Smith scored 25 points as Atlanta snapped Chicago's six-game winning streak.

Joe Johnson and Vladimir Radmanovic each added 17 for the Hawks, who led throughout.

John Lucas III had 14 of his team-high 16 points in the fourth quarter for the Bulls, who dropped to 7-2.

Derrick Rose, last season's league MVP, scored just eight points for Chicago — his lowest total since December 2010. He did not return to the game after leaving late in the third quarter.

Spurs 121, Nuggets 117

In San Antonio, Danny Green scored a season-high 24 points as San Antonio beat Denver for its sixth straight home win.

Green hit two free throws with 3.6 seconds left to ice it for the Spurs after Danilo Gallinari had hit a 3-pointer with 7.6 seconds left to pull Denver to 119-116.

Gallinari tied his career high with 31 points as the Nuggets' four-game winning streak was ended.

Richard Jefferson, who was 5 of 8 from long range, added 19 points for the Spurs.

Clippers 92, Bucks 86

In Los Angeles, Blake Griffin had 22 points and 14 rebounds to lead Los Angeles past undermanned Milwaukee.

Caron Butler scored 20 points for the Clippers in a chippy game that resulted in a combined 54 fouls.

Brandon Jennings scored 21 points and had seven assists for the Bucks, who have lost four straight. They played their third in a row without center Andrew Bogut, who is in Australia attending to personal matters with his family. Teammates Luc Mbah a Moute and Mike Dunleavy Jr. were also sidelined.

76ers 97, Raptors 62

In Philadelphia, Andre Iguodala had 14 points and 10 rebounds as Philadelphia cruised past Toronto and notched a fourth straight win.

Jrue Holiday also scored 14 points for the Sixers who are 5-2 and the early leaders in the Atlantic Division—a marked contrast to last season's 3-13 start. The Sixers blew the game open in the third quarter, using a 30-8 run to build a 25-point lead.

Andre Bargnani had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Raptors.

Jazz 88, Warriors 87

In Oakland, Gordon Hayward made a go-ahead free throw with 11 seconds remaining, lifting Utah past Golden State for its fourth straight victory.

Hayward finished with 18 points, six rebounds and four assists, and Al Jefferson added 15 points and eight rebounds for the Jazz, who won despite shooting just 39.5 percent.

Golden State's Monta Ellis had 32 points and six assists but had a costly turnover that led to Hayward's free throw and missed a running bank shot at the buzzer to send the Warriors to a fifth straight loss. Stephen Curry and starting center Andris Biedrins sat out for the second straight game with sprained ankles.

Pacers 99, Bobcats 77

In Indianapolis, Roy Hibbert had 20 points, eight rebounds and three blocks despite briefly leaving the game with a sprained ankle, leading Indiana over Charlotte.

Tyler Hansbrough scored 15 points for the Pacers, who improved to 3-0 at home.

D.J. Augustin scored 20 points for the Bobcats, who were held to 33 percent shooting compared to Indiana's 51.

Stricker shoots a 63, builds big lead in Hawaii

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—Steve Stricker, considered the best putter on the PGA Tour, felt as though he couldn't miss Saturday at Kapalua. That meant big trouble for the rest of the field at the Tournament of Champions.

Stricker made even some of the longer putts look like tap-ins on his way to a 10-under 63, giving him a five-shot lead over Webb Simpson halfway through the PGA Tour's season opener.

Stricker played the final five holes in 5 under, which included a 3-wood up the hill and into a blazing sun that settled about 12 feet away for eagle. That allowed Stricker to get some separation from Simpson, and from the amazing eagle-eagle finish by Kevin Na.

Stricker was at 15-under 131, two shots off the 36-hole record that Ernie Els set in 2003.

Na, six strokes back at 9 under, wasn't even part of the picture until he holed a 5-iron from 221 yards for eagle on the 554-yard 17th hole, then hit 3-wood down the hill on the par-5 18th to about 10 feet for another eagle.

"I think it'll be the best finish of my life," Na said.

It turned a good round into a 64, and it at least kept Na in the hunt against a 27-man field that suddenly felt much smaller when Stricker put together a strong finish of his own.

Only eight players were within 10 shots of Stricker.

As much as he loves starting his year in Kapalua—this is his third straight trip, the longest streak of anyone in the field—Stricker has yet to hoist a trophy with a lei draped around his neck. He took a big step toward that on another day of glorious sunshine.

Starting with a simple up-and-down on the par-5 ninth, Stricker was 7 under over the last 10 holes.

"I felt like I was going to make every putt I looked at for a while," Stricker said.

His big run began with a wedge against the wind that landed softly 7 feet below the hole on No. 14. After his eagle on the 15th, Stricker holed a 15-foot birdie from the front of the green on the 17th, and finished with a long two-putt birdie from just off the 18th.

He has played the par 5s in 9 under for the week.

"I've had some good success here," said Stricker, who has lost in a playoff and tied for fourth over the last four years. "The more times you can play it, the better off you are. I'd sure like to get off to a good start this year."

HYUNDAI Tournament of Champions

Rory Sabbatini has been here before, though that didn't keep him from a two-shot penalty at the start of his round for being late to the first tee. It was a bizarre penalty, only because the putting green is about 25 yards below the first tee.

His caddie, Mick Doran, took the blame. Instead of looking at the group ahead tee off, he was checking his watch—and his watch was four minutes slow. They rushed to the tee, but it was too late.

Sabbatini had a 70—including the two-shot penalty—was 12 shots behind.

"It's the first time ever for me on tour. I know it's the first time for Mick," Sabbatini said. "I guess neither of us were really paying attention. Just one of those goofy moments."

Last year, Doran was on the bag for Camilo Villegas, who was disqualified for tamping down grass as his ball was rolling back toward him.

Martin Laird had a birdie putt on No. 13 to get within one shot of Stricker, his playing partner. Four holes later, he was seven shots behind, hurt mostly by missing two short birdie putts and by hitting his tee shot into the trees on the 17th. A search party found more than a dozen balls, none belonging to Laird.

The Scot had a 70 and was at 8-under 138, along with first-round leader Jonathan Byrd, who had a 71. Chris Kirk was among the early starters and shot 66, though that turned out to be ordinary by the end of the day.

The trade wind has been strong enough to get players' attention, yet gentle enough to allow for good scoring. The key is to keep the ball out of trouble, to be in the right spots on the greens and to make a few putts.

It's that final area where Stricker has few peers.

Perhaps it should be no surprise that when he arrived in Hawaii from a short winter break in Wisconsin—with a three-day detour to Phoenix to play some golf—he focused primarily on his putting.

The closest he came to make a bogey came on the par-4 sixth, when he found a bunker at the top of the hill, failed to reach the green and chipped 8 feet by the hole. He poured in the par putt, rolled in a 25-foot birdie on the seventh and was on his way.

"I kind of ran with it," Stricker said. "I felt good. I started making some birdies, and I was patient when I wasn't making some. So it was good, and that's what you have to do when you get it going, it just kind of keep it going."

Even so, Stricker was quick to point that while a five-shot lead usually comes in handy on Saturday, this is only the halfway point for an experimental Monday finish. Besides, Stricker doesn't always make it easy on himself with a big lead.

In his most recent win, he had a four-shot lead at the turn at the Memorial and hung on to win by one shot.

Simpson, playing in the group ahead of Stricker, birdied three of his last four holes to get into the final group. He had made only two birdies until that point, but wasn't about to fret.

"It's the kind of course where you're going to have plenty of birdie opportunities," Simpson said. "So if you can keep your ball in play, you'll probably make a few."

He might need a few more to put pressure on Stricker, who came to Hawaii to see what kind of shape his game was in, and got a pretty good idea after the first two rounds of the year.

IT&E Voyagers, Villanueva reap awards in SBA banquet

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The IT&E Voyagers and team captain Rolly Villanueva came away with the highest honors in the Saipan Billiard Association yearend 2011 Summer/Fall awards banquet held yesterday's in Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

The IT&E Voyagers of Jonny's Bar & Grill finished first place in the Agingan division regular season and were also the post season Budweiser Cup champions.The division's MVP, Villanueva, fronts the team and joins Jojo Talibong, Luis Fajardo, Roman Rodriguez, Boyet Sequioco, RJ Mascaranas, Jao Bernardo, and Marc Brian Nelvis on the winning squad. Villanueva notched 13 wins in the season to take the MVP plum.

IT&E Incredibles of Utopia Sports Bar finished the season second place, ahead of third ranked Jonny's Home Boyz Five,

In the Obyan division, Wild Bill's Bar & Grill's Shark Attack finished first place in the regular season, while fifth-ranked Pirata of D'Pirates Bar claimed the coveted Obyan Budweiser Cup championship. Crazy 8 and Team SCS, both of Jonny's, placed second and third place in the regular season.

Shark Attack members include team captain Patrick Taitano, Ben Norita, Nojng Detdon, Vince Mareham, Nolas Kaliga, Jerry Ayuyu, Jack Thornsaket, and Bill Limes. Taitano swept all his 14 matches to notch the MVP trophy in the Obyan field.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Jonny's Bar & Grill's IT&E Voyagers players pose with their trophies during the awards banquet for the SBA 2011 Summer/Fall Open 8-Ball League yesterday in Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

The Budweiser Cup champion Pirata had team captain Randy Sablan, Joey Agulto, Dave Maratita, James Reyes, and Richard Santos as members.

Meanwhile, other individual awardees include Crazy 8's Ray Pinangay who ran the rack an Obyan league-best four times and Docomo Hustlers's Senen Pangelinan and IT&E Voyagers Villanueva, who accomplished the same feat five times apiece in the Agingan division.

Pinangay's teammate, Zaldy Quebral, and Pirata's Maratita were recognized for sinking the 8-Ball on the Break once apiece during the season and two-timer Joseph Achas of X-Tream.

Most improved player honors went to Obyan's Mike and Mei Rengiil of the 19th Hole Bar Titans for each tallying 10 assists during the season, while the 14 assists by IT&E Voyagers' Nelvis took the prize in the Agingan class. Sportsmanship team awards were issued to Agingan's X-Tream of VFW Post 3457 and Obyan's Team SCS.

SBA officials also handed a plaque of appreciation to 19th Hole Bar.

League organizers want to thank sponsors MARPAC, Saipan Computer Services, IT&E, Docomo Pacific NTT, Sand's Café Bar, Joe's Steakhouse, Jonny's, D'Pirates, Wild Bill's, Utopia, and VFW for all of their support.

In related news, the deadline to sign up for the upcoming 2012 Winter/Spring season is Jan. 24. Membership fees are also due on Jan. 24. There are new locations for interested teams this year. These include Poseidon across American Memorial Park, Islander Bar behind the Big Dipper, Bammy's in the Gold Beach Hotel and Water Front, formerly known as Buddies' Bar.

DYS

From Page 28

sang, Regis Perez, Deion Sabino, and Keolani Rios.

Docomo looked out of sync right from the tip off, allowing DYS to build a healthy 29-20 lead at halftime. Docomo committed a lot of unforced errors and DYS' tough defense prevented the former from penetrating the lane.

On offense, Lansang carried the torch for DYS in the first half with eight points and received mixed support from his teammates. DYS also converted four late free throws to end the half comfortably ahead.

Docomo battled its way back to within a point, 39-40, with four minutes left in regulation, but could not pull it together in the end. Emerson Feria missed a pair of free throws, but redeemed himself shortly after to tie it up at 40-all. However, Docomo's defense failed to stop Lansang, who answered with another go-ahead basket. Docomo had plenty of opportunities right under the basket to seize control of the game, but simply could not get the ball to go in.

Feria trooped to the foul line and nailed both shots to make it a one-point contest in the final minute, but DYS's Lansang answered with a cheeky and-1 play to seal the deal. Lansang missed the bonus shot, but it did not matter because Docomo could not secure the ensuing rebound and ran out of time.

Lansang led DYS with 17 markers and was awarded MVP honors for the U15 division for his standout performance. Perez and Cayading combined for 17 points to support Lansang.

Notably, DYS' finals appearance was quite a surprise, too, as it also upset second-ranked Proa-B in the semis.

Meanwhile, RBC's U12 and U17 Rollers AA were also victorious in the weekend's championship matches.

On Friday, U12's Rollers AA defeated Rollers A twice coming into the finals and did not disappoint on the big stage, 26-20.

Rollers A stepped up its game and forced a 10-all deadlock after the opening 16 minutes and the match continued back and forth after the pause until Rollers AA caught a surge late in the second half and held on for the win.

U12's Rollers AA team is made up of Angelo and T.J. Factor, Jonas Metran, John Tam, Roger Valencia, Yukki Yoshida, and Alfred Zamuel.

Angelo Factor was selected as U12 division MVP. Factor led all scorers with 12 points and received eight from his partner in crime, Valencia.

Christian Itaas carried Rollers A's with 10 points, while Ethan Kwon chipped in eight.

In the U17 finals, Rollers AA crew bested Rollers A, 57-50, last Saturday.

U17's Rollers AA is made up of Jack Aranda, John Carlo Darag, David Diaz, Erick Dela Rosa, Kiyoshi Rios, Lawrence Deleon Guerrero, Ralph Francisco, and Albert Salas.

Rollers AA amassed a promising 32-7 margin in the first half and fended off a Rollers A big rally to secure the win.

Francisco led Rollers AA with 10 points in the opening frame and finished with a team-high 19, however his teammate, John Carlo Darag, was selected as MVP because of th latter's tremendous defensive performance in the early charge. Darag also finished with 18 markers.

Rollers A's Dixon Kwon scrambled for 19 points, 18 of which came in the second half comeback attempt.

Team trophies were awarded to the Top 2 finishers in each division. In addition, RBC awarded various gift certificates as special prizes to Cudia, Malonzo, Pangelinan and Rios member-families in gratitude for their continued support of the club.

3 TEAMS

From Page 28

last semis ticket after surviving Sherwin Williams in overtime, 92-91. Jun Patawaran made the game-winning shot in the closing seconds off a feed from Pete Lizama. Sherwin Williams had the last shot in the remaining five seconds, but Jun Estolas failed to cash in.

Wushin fell behind most of the way and forced an overtime, 78-all, after canning four free throws in the dying seconds of the fourth quarter. Lizama drilled three charities, while Guiab had a split. Estolas scored Sherwin William's last three points in regulation to stay afloat, but fell short in the extra five minutes.

Lizama led Wushin with 31 points, while Jun Tabora added 20, making six of them in overtime.

In the first game last Friday, SCS also pulled off a close win against 8th Division, 77-76, to march into the semifinals.

Manolo Manalo sizzled four 26 points for SCS, nailing two crucial free throws that sealed the win for his team. Rocyl Ritual chipped in 12.

SCS had early control of the playoff match, posting a 21-12 advantage, behind Manalo's eight markers. 8th Division then picked up its scoring in the second period, outgunning SCS, 22-18, to move within five at the break, 34-39.

The match remained close after three quarters with SCS ahead by only a hair, 53-52, as 8th Division's defense held Manalo to only one field goal in the third period.

However, Manalo showed up anew in the fourth canto, tallying eight points, while Jessie Mina added seven, including a crucial triple late in the final period, to save SCS.

After the first game of the night, Blue Haus/Satbahi and FGC Builders played the continuation of their rained-out match with the former cruising to a 68-47 victory.

Before the resumption of the match, Blue Haus was enjoying a 60-43 advantage and added eight more points in the remaining 5:08 to eliminate FGC.

Brandon Talania top-scored for Blue Haus with 18 points.

First Game

SCS 77 – Manalo 26, Ritual 12, Mina 9, Tobias 8, Guiang 6, Pantaleon 6, Miranda 5, Comeo 2.

8th Division 76 – Bernardo 18, Ngeskebei 18, E. Duenas 17, Mat. Duenas 8, Mateo 5, Detera 4, Factor 4.

Scoring by quarters: 21-12, 39-34, 52-51, 77-76.

Second Game

Blue Haus/Satbahi 68 – Talania 18, Itaas 12, B. Camacho 14, E. Camacho 8, Cruz 6, Fernand 3, Abedes 3, Sison 2.

FGC Builders 47 – Barrios 15, B. Montano 10, Camacho 6, W. Capalad 6, Dayrit 4, M. Capald 2, Llagas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 14-6, 38, 27, 53-36, 68-47.

Third Game

Wushin Express 92 – Lizama 31, Tabora 20, Guiab 13, Santos 12, Tibayan 11, Patawaran 2, Ebuen 1.

Sherwin Williams 91 – Estolas 42, Mangali 31, Galzote 8, Reyes 4, Dayrit 4, Mallari 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-20, 38-42, 57-63, 78-78, 92-91.

MINOR

From Page 28

bowing to Victoria's Bronwyn Plowman, 4-6, 4-7 (4).

Miller is a first timer in the Margaret Court Cup and won his opening game in the boys U16 qualifying draw. The 16-year-old Commonwealth netter was paired against Australia's Lachlan Anthony Shrimpton and shut out his foe last Friday morning, 6-0, 6-0. It took Miller only 48 minutes to oust Shrimpton, however, he failed to sustain his momentum and bowed to Dominic Marquis last Friday afternoon, 3-6, 2-6.

Miller went on to play in the consolation draw of the qualifier and suffered another loss at the hands of the Cook Islands' Tamarua Payne last Saturday. Miller won the opening set, 6-3, but lost the extended match that lasted for more than two hours, as Payne took the last two sets, 6-3, 10-8.

Then less than an hour after playing in the consolation draw, Miller joined forces with Tahiti's Heve Kelly and they lost to Australia's Cameron Cole and Nathan Ponton in the first round of the boys U16 doubles main draw, 2-6, 3-6.

Meanwhile, Rafael Jones also had to go through the men's singles qualifying draw and went on to lose to Australia's Conrad Lim last Friday, 2-6, 0-6. He fell to the consolation draw where he redeemed himself after posting two victories last Saturday. The 16-year-old netter defeated Australia's Luke Mitchell (via walkover) and the No. 4 seed Harry Lim, 6-4, 6-1. Jones was scheduled to challenge another Australian player—Stephen O'Hehir—in the quarterfinals of the consolation draw yesterday afternoon.

In the men's doubles, Jones teamed up with Fiji's Chris Hargrove and they bowed to siblings Jack and William Jamie Swindells of Australia after the tough one and a half hour game, 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Tammy Ackerman, the fourth CNMI junior netter competing in Australia, was scheduled to play in her first match in the girls U12 singles yesterday, but results of her game against Jasmin Ruby Starr were unavailable at press time.

CABRERA

From Page 28

of 82. But with his 10 handicap, Dela Cruz only had a net 72 to settle for second place.

Meanwhile, Gerald Guerrero started out with a 43 in the first nine holes and finished with a 45 after the turn. He pulled to the clubhouse with an 88 gross card that worked into a 74 net count for third place.

Cabrera won a $300 cash prize and was gifted free club membership for the 2012 season for winning the Ace of Aces event. Dela Cruz received $200 in cash and Guerrero got $100.

Last Saturday's tournament also doubled as XGA's 2012 season opener, which left Cabrera as the winner of the January Ace. Cabrera now qualifies for the Ace of the Aces competition.

Cabrera took the January Ace honors ahead of newcomer Roy Ada and Dela Cruz. Ada started slow with a 47 on the front, but recovered on the back with a 38 for a gross score of 85 that adjusted into a 71 net card. Cabrera also pocketed an extra $170 for topping the January event, while Ada received $100 and Dela Cruz got an extra $70.

There were also four closest to the pin side bets held as part of the Ace of Aces event. Hyun An won on hole No. 3, while Dung Tenorio and John Cepeda prevailed on hole Nos. 7 and 12, respectively. The prize for hole No. 14 went back to the club as nobody qualified for the side bet.

Notably, out of 20 participants in the weekend event, J.J. Atalig finished the day with the lowest gross of 80. He carded a 40 on both the front and back nines and ended up with a 76 net score, which was good for fifth place.

Meanwhile, XGA acknowledged its members who did well in 2011. The list includes Atalig, who won the 2nd Annual Docomo Golf Classic's Championship flight and topped the A Flight of the HANMI Cup. Atalig also teamed up with Dela Cruz and won the Saipan Chamber of Commerce tournament last month. John Reyes took first place in the 16th Annual Tournament of Champions' C Flight, while a foursome of XGA players finished second place in the Club At The Hyatt Golf Classic.

XGA is made up of about 30 members and is currently accepting new members until March 1. In contrast to its name, XGA said anyone can join the club, male or female.

Newcomers are required to pay the $50 annual fee in addition to the $25 club uniform fee. Membership renewal is only $40.

During competitions, players are also required to pay the greens fee along with the $30 tournament fees that go toward the awards banquet, prize money, and incentives.

Weekend Sports

Slow start for sports community

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The year started slow for the CNMI sports community as only the regular competitions on the island kicked off 2012 with games last week.

In the 2011 DLX Basketball Invitational Friendship League, eight teams played in the first round of the playoffs and four were left standing after last Friday's matches. Making it to the semifinals are MDX/Blue Haus, Blue Haus/Satbahi, Wushin Express, and SCS Heavy Equipment Rental. MDX defeated Pacific Postal, while Blue Haus prevailed over FGC in the first two playoff games. Wushin Express and SCS downed Sherwin Williams and 8th Division in the two remaining playoff matches.

Still in basketball, U12, U15, and U17 teams competed in the first weekend of the 2nd Annual RBC-IT&E Christmas Basketball Tournament at the Garapan Basketball Court. Docomo Rollers led in the U15 division, while Rollers AA and Proa A were in the Top 2 in the U17 age group. Only two teams were entered in the U12 division in Rollers A and Rollers AA.

Age group competitions in the 2011 Saipan Soccer School Youth Futsal League also continued at the TSL Sports Complex last week.

In the boys U18, IT&E took the spot, while Astig Futsal also remained on top in the girls U17. Konflikt and Astig Futsal are battling it out for the lead in the boys U15.

Other sports started the year with announcements of their respective events for 2012.

In swimming, Tsunami Saipan will be competing in six events: the All Island Invitational Series 1 to 3, 20-meter short course meet, Tokyo Junior Sprint, and the Guam Championships.

In triathlon, four events were lined up for this month. The list includes the Tagaman/XTERRA Enticer 1 (Jan.7), XTERRA Trail 1 (Jan. 14), Tagaman Swim (Jan.21), and SDA MTB/Road Bike Race (Jan.22). Several swim, bike, and run races were set from February to the first two weeks of March to prepare athletes for the 2012 XTERRA Saipan Championship and Tagaman Triathlon.

In Little League, Saipan Little League Baseball president Juan I. Tenorio has scheduled a meeting on Jan. 11 to discuss the 2012 season.

In the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization, it announced the start of its boys basketball and girls volleyball leagues.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Two Pacific Postal Plus players watch MDX's Zack Babauta make an easy layup during their playoff game in the DLX caging last week at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Rollers A and Rollers AA players in action during their game in the 2nd Annual RBC-IT&E Christmas Basketball Tournament at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Swimmers race in the waters of Paupau Beach during the Enticer 1 last Saturday

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Astig Futsal's Sean Perez, and Konflikt's Enrico del Rosario chase the ball during their game in the youth futsal league at the TSL Sports Complex.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
An Astig Futsal player, left, dribbles against a Go Green Team defender during the girls U17 game in the youth futsal league at the TSL Sports Complex.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Players in the U17 division game battle for the rebound during the 2nd Annual RBC-IT&E Christmas Basketball Tournament at the Garapan Basketball Court.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
A Rollers player stretches for a layup during a game in the 2nd Annual RBC-IT&E Christmas Basketball Tournament at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

DYS upsets Docomo Rollers in finals

3 teams complete DLX semis cast

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2011 DLX Basketball Invitational Friendship League is now down to Final Four after the three remaining quarterfinal games were completed last Friday at the Gualo Rai Court Basketball.

SCS Heavy Equipment Rental, Blue Haus/Satbahi, and Wushin Express won their respective first round playoff matches to join early qualifier MDX in the semifinals. Wushin Express and MDX collide in the first semis match tonight at 6pm, while SCS meets Blue Haus/Satbahi in the other Final Four pairing at 8pm.

Wushin Express booked the

See 3 TEAMS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
SCS Heavy Equipment Rental's Manolo Manalo goes up for a shot against 8th Division during a playoff game in the DLX caging last Friday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Players of the DYS Rollers pose for a photo after beating the Docomo Rollers in the U15 finals of Rollers Basketball Club's 2nd Annual IT&E Youth Friendly Christmas Tournament last Friday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The DYS Rollers stunned the top-ranked Docomo Rollers, 45-43, to claim top honors in the U15 division of the Rollers Basketball Club's 2nd Annual IT&E Youth Friendly Christmas Tournament held at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Docomo came into the finals undefeated, but laid an egg in Friday's main event and fell to the Department of Youth Services-sponsored squad. The victory allowed DYS to avenge its tough 47-50 loss to Docomo in last week's opening rounds. The champion team is made of Shaun Acopiado, Jeron Ano, Justin Cayading, Ed Cudia, Mikey Fidelino, Renan Lan-

See DYS on Page 26

Minor, Miller win first match in Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI junior tennis players Thea Minor and Christian Miller got off to a good start in the 2012 Australia Post Margaret Court Cup after winning their opening matches in the U16 singles.

Minor was pitted against New South Wales' Sarah Mitchell and cruised to a straight set win, 6-1, 6-0, yesterday morning at the Albury Tennis Courts in Albury. The CNMI bet is at the top half of the 12-player main draw and will be up against a much tougher foe in the second round, as she will face the No. 1 seed Marta Brzozowska of Victoria. The top-ranked Australian drew a bye in the first round.

Miller

Minor

The 16-year-old Minor is one of the three Oceania ITF Touring Team members who advanced to the next round. The two others were Fiji's Annie Shannon, who nailed a 6-2, 6-3 win over New Caledonia's Assaya Trimari, and Tuvalu's Alesi Molotii, who downed Victoria's Julia Stutsel, 6-3, 6-0.

Minor is also entered in the doubles and she and Shannon were scheduled to duel top seeds Brzozowska and Lauren Smileski in the first match of the round-robin competition yesterday afternoon. Five pairs are battling for the girls U16 doubles crown.

The victory in the first round of the competition in Albury was a boost for Minor, as she lost in the same event last year,

See MINOR on Page 26

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
From left, XGA president Dave Cepeda, secretary and event winner J.J. Cabrera, treasurer Dung Tenorio, and vice president Gerald Guerrero pose for a group photo at Cepeda's residence in Dandan during the awards banquet for the group's Ace of the Aces event last Saturday.

Cabrera takes XGA Ace of Aces

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

J.J. Cabrera clinched the X-clusive Golfers Association's 2011 Ace of Aces championship after ruling the group's season-ending event last Saturday at Coral Ocean Point.

Cabrera scratched a 42 on the front nine and stumbled to a 48 after the turn to finish with an even raw score of 90, but his 20 handicap gave him the nod with a 70 net, two strokes ahead of runner-up Joey Dela Cruz.

Dela Cruz played better than Cabrera on the front nine with the former shooting a 40 and then managed a 42 on the back nine to finish with a gross card

See CABRERA on Page 26